

FRANK MERRIWELL'S SPORTS AFIELD

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"Over the line Merriwell went and dropped on the ball." See page 99.

FRANK MERRIWELL'S SPORTS AFIELD

BY

BURT L. STANDISH

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"Frank Merriwell's Schooldays," "Frank Merriwell's Trip West,"

"Frank Merriwell's Chums," "Frank Merriwell's Foes,"

"Frank Merriwell at Yale," etc.

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Frank Merriwell's Sports Afield

FRANK MERRIWELL'S SPORTS AFIELD.

CHAPTER I.

A PEACE CONFERENCE.

The first year at Yale was past and the second had begun. Frank Merriwell was a sophomore at last.

The year had brought many changes. The men of 'Umpty-seven, the foes of a year ago, were juniors now, with a few exceptions. Punch Swallows, red-headed, big-hearted, noble fellow, had been drowned during vacation in a brave attempt to rescue a total stranger. The stranger had fastened his hands on Swallows' neck with a death clutch, and both had gone down. They were found locked in each other's clasp, and all efforts at resuscitation had been fruitless.

The death of Swallows cast a profound gloom over 'Umpty-seven. His former comrades and friends spoke of him with deep feeling. It was remembered that he had always been loyal, and no man could say that "good old Punch" had ever been known to do a mean thing.

Hod Chadwick had broken down and was said to be in a state of complete nervous prostration. When his physician was asked the cause he gave his answer in one word—"Cigarettes."

But most astonishing, most wonderful, most incomprehensible of all things, Bruce Browning, the "great and only," the "King of the Sophomores," had been dropped. To the men of 'Umpty-eight such a thing seemed utterly beyond the bounds of possibility. The boldness of the faculty, the remarkable "nerve" of it, was enough to make them gasp with unspeakable wonder.

True, Browning had never paid much attention to his studies and he had flunked times without number; but he had been the leader of his class in every wild project. He had been recognized and honored as king; it was said that he was away up in He Boule and was sure of making Psi Upsilon or Delta Kappa Epsilon in his junior year.

Now he was dropped. He would have to go all over that second year again or abandon all hope of getting through Yale. 'Umpty-eight wondered what he would do. It did not seem possible that he, who had been Frank Merriwell's most aggressive antagonist, could bring himself to take up with 'Umpty-eight and recognize Merriwell's supremacy.

'Umpty-eight had not been broken. Every man returned, and all seemed to come back in the best of spirits. Even Roland Ditson was there, although he was still shunned to a great extent by the men who could not forget his treachery of other days.

Merriwell had thought of securing apartments in Welch Hall, but he found many of his friends going over into South Middle, and he had a desire to cling to the gang.

Harry Rattleton, Frank's close chum and roommate, hung by Merriwell, but he said South Middle was good enough for him, and so to South Middle they went. They did not mind if the floor did slant away from the windows and toward the room in which they slept.

"I am going to get casters put on my chair," said Harry, "and then I can bate to sked—I mean skate to bed without getting up at all. All I'll have to do is give a push, and away I'll scoot down the toboggan slide."

For all that he had chosen South Middle, Merriwell set about decorating the rooms in a manner that elicited no small amount of surprise. On the floors he spread rugs made from the skins of tigers, grizzly bears, and other wild animals. On the walls he hung peculiar weapons of savage tribes, war clubs, bows, arrows, a wooden spear with a crude iron head, a heavy ax, the

blade of which was rusty and stained with blood, curved swords, queer old pistols, and other things of curious interest to all who saw them.

Away up near the ceiling, safely out of reach, was hung a strange knife, the blade of which was tipped with green. This knife was in a case with a glass front, and on the case was a slip of paper, upon which were printed these words:

"THE SNAKE KNIFE OF THE PAMPAS.
"POISON!"

On the mantel and on cabinet stands were scores of queer objects, such as stone idols, crude images of iron and brass, strange and beautiful shells, minerals and crystals, and objects which were interesting but nameless.

There were pictures of scenes in many lands, and it seemed that it must have taken no small time to make such a collection from various parts of the world.

Without delay Frank warned Harry not to open the case and take out "the snake knife." He told him the warning on the case was no joke, for one prick from the point of that knife meant sure death.

"Well, I'd like to know where you got hold of all these things!" cried Rattleton. "You must have

bought them in a lump from some crazy crank of a collector."

Frank smiled and shook his head.

"I gathered them one by one myself," he declared, "and there is not an object in the lot that has not its own little story, some of the stories being rather interesting."

"Look here, Merriwell!" spluttered Rattleton. "Here you and I have been together a year, and I don't know much of anything about you save what I have seen. I have told you all about myself, but you never tell me much of yourself. I don't think it is fair. What's the use of bottling up that way? I have heard something said about you being a traveler and going around the world, but I never could get anything out of you. Is that giving me a square deal?"

"What's the use to talk about what one has done? It's not that which counts here. It is what a man can do. You know as well as I that every man here is sized up for his ability, and not by what he says he has been."

"That's all right. You have shown what you can do, and now there is no reason why you should not let your friends know what you have done."

"Oh, well, sometime when I am in the mood I don't mind telling you some of the stories connected with

these relics I have picked up. Wait till I feel in the spirit."

Harry knew it was useless to urge his friend, so he waited, grumbling somewhat, and feeling his curiosity spurred and aroused whenever he looked at the strange objects scattered about the room.

Frank and Harry notified their former friends that their rooms must still be considered "Liberty Hall," and so the fellows used to drop in often, just as they had in those days already described in "Frank Merriwell at Yale." At least twice a week there was a jolly gathering there.

"Fellows," said Frank one day, "I want you all to come around to-night. You know Browning, poor fellow, has been pegging away by himself. I have invited him around and he is coming. We will have a general powwow."

Browning came, and he was welcomed heartily by his former foes. He loafed in with his old lazy air and quietly asked:

"Gentlemen of 'Umpty-eight, have I been invited to the slaughter, or is it to be a peace conference?"

"We hope to bury the hatchet and smoke the pipe of peace," said Frank.

"That is good," said Browning, beaming serenely around him, "and it reminds me of a conundrum.

What is the difference between an Indian and an Irishman? Give it up? Well, one smokes the pipe of peace and the other smokes a piece of a pipe. If you don't take my scalp now I shall begin to believe you do not mean me any harm."

They gathered about him and all shook his hand. He was given the most comfortable chair in the room, and when he had lighted a cigarette and placed his feet on the window sill he murmured:

"Is it all a dream? And are these my foes of yore? Why, I expected to drop with a thud, and I have fallen so lightly and alighted here in the midst of 'Umpty-eight that it has taken away all the sting. Hooray for good old 'Umpty-eight! I am with you, gentlemen, and I propose to get square by wreaking deadly vengeance on 'Umpty-nine."

"Speaking of stings," chuckled Danny Griswold, "reminds me of a little rhyme I heard the other day. It runs like this:

"When you see the bumblebee
Bumming o'er the lea,
If you have good sense,
You'll let that bumblebee."

"As a rule, we are too curious," laughed Halliday. "We want to touch him, just to see if he will bite."

"As long as Browning has sprung a conundrum on us," said Merriwell, "I will venture to give you one."

"Go on, gasped Rattleton. "It may kill two or three of us, but, then, never mind. That's a small matter."

"Well, then, how would you make a rooster lay?"

"I would eggs plain to him how it was done," said Robinson, promptly.

"That would be eggscellent," smiled Frank, "but he might not eggsactly understand."

"Then I'll give it up. How would you make a rooster lay?"

"Hit him on the head with a club. That's the only way I know of."

There was a deathly silence, and every fellow looked at Frank in the blankest manner possible. Not one of them cracked a smile. At last Griswold gasped:

"Air—water—whiskey! Any old thing will do! If you haven't any whiskey give me some strychnine! Anything for relief after that!"

"That's pretty bad," said Silas Blossom, "but I know where you will find worse."

"Where?"

"In the dictionary."

"Look here," drawled Browning, with a lazy wave

of his hand. "If I had dreamed of this I don't think I'd come back to college."

"That's another reminder," said Halliday. "I've got a friend at Harvard who has a little brother. One day a visitor asked the little fellow if his brother was back at college. 'No, sir,' was the prompt answer. 'He is half-back.'"

"And that is a reminder that the football season is upon us," observed Robinson. "Does any one have an idea how the team will be made up this year?"

That was a question of universal interest, as was immediately shown by the dropping of persiflage. Every man in Yale, regardless of whether he was on the team or not, or had any friends on the team, was interested in the 'Varsity eleven. Yale had a proud record at the great game, and that record must be sustained.

But there was no telling what the season might bring forth. In former days Harvard had been Yale's most formidable rival, but now there were others. Pennsylvania was not in the field for the sake of giving other teams practice. She was out for business, first, last and all the time.

But Princeton was Yale's great rival. There were still those who professed to sneer at "Old Nassau," but the wise ones were doing no sneering. It was no acci-

dent that Princeton had already beaten Yale handsomely, although some cranks persisted in regarding it as such.

Beyond a doubt Princeton was putting almost all her energy into football, and it was plainly her intention to beat Yale in the final contest on Manhattan field, in New York.

"Of course no one can tell anything about how the eleven will be made up," said Blossom. "As yet we scarcely know who all the candidates are."

"I understand you are making a try for the eleven, Merriwell?" said Griswold. "This has not been long?"

"Not long," answered Frank. "I have been invited out to practice, that is all."

"And Halliday," said Jones. "He is practicing, too. Where do you expect to play, Hally?"

"I don't know as I shall play at all. Like Merriwell, I have been asked to practice, that is all."

"Well, you can bet Old Man Hickson did not ask you to practice for fun," observed Burn Putnam. "He's got his eye on both you and Merriwell."

"Here's Browning," cried Griswold. "He knows more about these matters than we do. We haven't consulted him."

Bruce blew out a cloud of smoke and slowly fanned it away with his hand.

"Don't put me to any unnecessary exertion, I beg of you," he murmured. "I do not care even to think, unless it is absolutely necessary."

"Behold the champion lazy man!" cried Rattleton. "He takes the first prize without a struggle."

"Without a struggle is good," yawned Bruce. "If I had to struggle for it I'd never get it."

"You know more about football than the rest of us," said Frank. "What can you tell us of the team?"

"Well, there is no doubt Flemming, Thornton, Van Tassle and Costigan will be on the eleven. They are the good men left over from last year. Flemming is one of the best end men I ever saw, and Van Tassle can kick like an old-fashioned muzzle-loading gun. He was full-back last year, but I have heard that he may be placed in another position this season. There are lots of new men trying for the team, and it will be some time before any man will be able to tell who will get there. It is a fact that we stand in desperate need of new blood. Yale must beat Princeton this year anyhow."

"Princeton! Who said Princeton?" cried Blossom, derisively. "Where is Princeton, anyhow?"

"Now, don't you go to making a mistake about Princeton," warned Browning, arousing a bit. "She will show you where she is before the season is over."

The Tigers are the toughest boys our men will go against this year."

"Oh, Princeton's got the swelled head and she thinks she is going out to do the earth. When she gets against Old Eli she'll not be in it for a little minute."

"All right," murmured Bruce, dreamily; "think that way if you like, but you'll find you are fooling yourself."

He smiled a trifle wearily over the wonderful wisdom of the new sophs. He had begun to realize there is no one on earth who knows so much in his own mind as a sophomore—unless it is a freshman.

"I think Browning is right," said Frank. "I have heard that Princeton already knows very nearly who will be on her eleven, and they are hammering away now like the tigers they are to get themselves into shape. Crackingham is the principal coach, and everybody knows what he can do with decent material."

"You talk as if you acknowledged Princeton's superiority already, Merriwell," put in Halliday in a manner that was somewhat cutting. "That's not the right spirit."

"You mistake me entirely, Halliday. I do not acknowledge Princeton's superiority, but I believe the Tigers will be our strongest opponents. I think over-

confidence is even worse than healthy respect for an enemy's ability."

Frank was touched a trifle by Halliday's words and manner. He realized that Ben was a bit jealous, and it was that which led him to speak in such a manner.

"What's this yarn about Princeton having a new and improved tackling machine?" asked Putnam.

"It is straight," said Browning.

"Well, what are the improvements on the old arrangement?"

"That I do not know, but I have heard that a man is forced to tackle it in a proper manner, or he is sure to get his head injured. That makes them get down in practice."

"Oh, this tackling machine business is all rot!" cried Robinson. "It is better to tackle a man who is running."

"That is all right enough," admitted Browning, "but every time you tackle a man there is a good chance for one or the other to be severely hurt, and it doesn't pay to use up your men in practice. Over training and over practice are great evils. With the machine a man is taught to tackle exactly as he should, and the chances of his being injured are lessened. I favor the machine."

"Well, I suppose you know," grinned Robinson, "but

it seems foolish to me to practice tackling a hard-stuffed bag swung by ropes and pulleys."

"Don't you ever tackle old Crackingham for a fool, and he recommends the machine. He will keep every Princeton man at it till they are perfect in the art of tackling."

"Well, we'll do them, anyway!" shouted Griswold. "They may have all their machines and everything else, but we'll get there just the same."

"If you should happen to make such a record at football as you did at baseball you'd get your name up, Merriwell," said Blossom.

"Don't you think it is trying too much to play both games?" asked Jones, with a queer look at both Merriwell and Halliday.

"Oh, I don't know," answered Frank. "Athletics are my very life. I keep alive by the work I do in that line."

"I do not believe a man who is a baseball pitcher should take chances of being injured in football," said Browning.

"I may not get an opportunity to take any chances," said Frank, with a smile.

Outside the door of the room, which was slightly open, a youth had paused to listen. He knew he would not be welcome in Merriwell's room, and so he did not

enter, but he stood there, his lips curling in a sneer whenever he heard Frank speak. As Merriwell uttered the final words the listener hoarsely whispered to himself:

“You’ll not get an opportunity if I can help it! I have kept quiet a long time, and they are watching me no longer. Now I will make one more effort to strike a blow that will reach you. I’ll take care that I am not found out in it this time, whether I fail or not. But I will not fail! I hate Frank Merriwell—I hate him, hate him! It is hard to keep my hatred in check, but the past has taught me to be careful. But I will find a way to ruin Merriwell’s prospects and drag him in the mire of disgrace, as he has dragged me, or my name is not Roland Ditson!”

Then he tiptoed gently away from the door.

CHAPTER II.

FOOTBALL PRACTICE.

Both Merriwell and Halliday went to practice regularly. Old Man Hickson pretended not to pay much attention to either of them, letting the other coaches take them in hand, but he had his eyes on them all the time, and one day Halliday overheard him say:

"Those fellows both show up pretty well. I haven't decided between them yet."

"If Merriwell were out of the way I'd get on the team," thought Ben, dolefully.

Halliday soon found an opportunity to speak to Frank.

"Merry, old boy," he said, "if we both keep at this one of us will have to be a substitute. We can't both get on the team."

"How do you know?"

"I have it straight. Now, don't you think you have won glory enough at baseball? Why shouldn't you let up on this and give me a show?"

"By Jove! that is a cheeky proposal, Halliday!" exclaimed Frank. "I really admire your nerve!"

Ben flushed.

"Well, I don't know!" he said, rather warmly. "I didn't suppose you were looking for all the glory there is to be gathered in."

"Is that a crime? But I will tell you frankly that it is not so much the glory I am looking for as the sport. Besides that, if I can do anything to put Old Eli on top I feel it my duty to do all I can. Why, man, you don't know what will happen! Here are more than thirty of us going out day after day and working like slaves. We get bruised and bunged and we are jawed, but we keep at it, willing to take anything for the sake of Old Eli. Already eight or ten fellows have been told to get their hair cut and show themselves on the campus, which is notification that they are not wanted and are out of the game for this year at least. If we do not continue to improve one of us may be notified next—who knows?"

This did not satisfy Halliday. Somehow he felt sure that if it came to a matter of choosing between them Merriwell was certain to be the one selected.

At two o'clock in the afternoon on practice days Yale field would be deserted. The baseball diamond showed neglect and the grand stand was covered with dust. Farther on, the white goal posts of the football field loomed up like lighthouses. The grass was green and the chalk lines of the gridiron new and fresh.

Shortly after two o'clock Captain Hickson, wearing a blue sweater on which was a large white Y, would come through the gate at a dog trot. Behind him would follow between thirty and forty young men, from whom the eleven must eventually be chosen. Every third man carried a new football.

Straight to the gridiron Hickson led the men, and then sweaters were quickly shed, and in a few seconds the boys began to pass the ball.

The captain of the previous year was there, and he was consulted by Old Man Hickson. Other coaches were at hand, but as this was still so early in the season there were but two of them. Later on there would be more, until a week before the annual game it was probable there would be nearly as many coaches as players.

Captain Hickson selected a dozen men and took them off into a corner of the field, where he lined them up and then made them go through the motions of advancing the ball, using some very simple signals. The ball was snapped back, the line broke into interference, and the men moved forward a short distance, where they stopped and formed again.

The rest of the squad were taken in hand by the two coaches, who used anything but language that was mild and gentle in addressing them.

"Line up in front of these goal posts!" yelled one.

"And get a move on, too!" shouted the other. "You are not out here for your health."

The lads made a lively scramble for positions, and then two of them were called on to stand out and catch some punts.

Boom! Away sailed the ball into the air, with a twisting motion.

"I'll take it," cried one young fellow as he got into position.

But he muffed and the coach instantly cried:

"What's your name?"

The unfortunate muffer humbly gave his name.

"Well, what do you know, anyway? Ever try for a position before?"

The one questioned confessed that it was his third trial.

"And you don't know how to catch a football yet. This isn't baseball. Here, take 'em down here—like this. Ready for another now. Look out for those double twisters! Run in—run in on it! Don't stand there like a gawk!"

The candidate attempted to obey, but he made another muff. Eight balls came over before he succeeded in holding one.

"One out of eight!" sneered the coach. "That is

great work! You're a whole eleven! Get back, now, and give somebody else a show."

And so it went on, the perspiring candidates making numerous muffs and being railed at by the energetic coaches, who got red in the face shouting criticisms and comments.

It was not play. It was genuine work, and the aspiring candidates never murmured, no matter how severe the language of the coaches. They were made to run after balls they muffed and fall on them; they were told the fine points of punt catching; they were kept on the jump every moment of the time. At last one of the disgusted coaches shouted:

"I presume you are all aware that this is a roaring farce?"

There were ten minutes of this kind of work, and then two elevens were made up and a short game was played.

The coaches took their positions behind the teams and kept the men at it like slave drivers. They yelled their comments and criticisms so loudly that the signals of the quarter-backs could scarcely be heard.

After five minutes of this the teams were given a short rest, and then they were driven to work again, and they were kept at it till time for practice was over.

Neither of the coaches used profanity, but on several occasions they looked as if they longed to do so.

When it was all over the men drew on their sweaters and left the field, climbing on board two trolley cars which were waiting for them near the entrance.

It happened that Merriwell and Halliday sat side by side on the way back from the field, and Frank noticed that Ben was downcast and glum.

"What's the matter?" asked Frank.

"I don't know," was the answer, "but I never made such a mess of practice before. I'm afraid I have hurt my chances."

"Nonsense! A man whom Hickson has looked on with favor isn't going to ruin his chances so easily. You were out of condition—didn't feel well, that's all. You will be all right next time."

"Well, it isn't any school picnic."

"Not any! But you've got stamina and you will make the team. Just keep at it for all you are worth."

Halliday did not say anything more, but he thought:

"If you weren't a white man, Merriwell, I could hate you; but you don't seem to know what it is to be jealous of another fellow."

Among those trying for the eleven was Evan Hartwick, who had formerly been the roommate and friend of Bruce Browning. Hartwick was a tall, well-built

lad, who held a very high opinion of himself and his own abilities.

While Browning had secretly admired Merriwell, even when they were open enemies, Hartwick had ever professed the utmost scorn for Frank. As he was not popular himself, he could not understand how another lad could become so well known and well liked during his freshman year.

Hartwick had made a desperate try for the eleven the year before, and nothing could convince him that he had failed to succeed through his own lack of ability. He firmly believed that there had been favoritism in the selection of the team and that was why he had not got on.

"Next year," he thought—"next year I will get there."

When Hartwick saw Merriwell among the candidates he felt like choking him.

"It will be his luck to win and keep somebody else out!" thought Evan. "I never saw a fellow have such luck. He never tries for anything that he doesn't make a go of it, and there are lots of fellows just as smart as he is."

Hartwick never could see how it was possible for any fellow to be smarter than himself. If they beat him at anything it must be from sheer luck.

Until Browning was dropped Merriwell scarcely knew there was such a fellow as Hartwick at Yale. Then when he heard that Browning's former roommate and chum had cut him dead he felt that such a man must be a thoroughbred cad, and he looked Hartwick over.

But Frank soon had cause to remember Evan Hartwick.

One afternoon as Merriwell and a friend had paused to chat a moment on a corner, two very pretty girls came along. The face of one of them in particular was attractive to Frank, and he looked at her, without giving her a rude stare.

As the girls passed the one that had attracted Frank's notice dropped a letter she was carrying. He lost no time in picking it up and hastening to restore it to her.

The letter was plainly one that had lately been received through the mail, and as Frank lifted it from the pavement he observed the name upon it.

That name was Miss Winifred Lee.

"A pretty name, and a remarkably pretty girl," thought Frank as he hurried after the girls.

Lifting his hat he said:

"I beg your pardon, but I think one of you young ladies dropped this letter."

"Why, yes, it is mine," said the girl Frank had no-

ticed, receiving it from his hand. "How careless of me! Thank you, sir."

Their eyes met, and the glance that she gave him was both coquettish and modest. It sent a singular feeling straight to Merriwell's heart, and the look in his own eyes was enough to bring a bit of additional color to her cheeks.

"You are entirely welcome," murmured Frank. "It was a pleasure."

Then the girls went on and left Frank, in a rather bewildered condition, staring after them, although he was quite unaware that he was doing so.

"By Jove!" he muttered; "she's a queen, and that is on the level! Those eyes—those lips! Good gracious! but I would like to know her!"

Then he observed a young man who was hurrying to overtake the girls, and to his surprise he saw it was Hartwick.

"Can it be that fellow knows them?" murmured Frank.

The point was soon decided, for Hartwick overtook them, lifted his hat gracefully, and walked along at their side. Both girls recognized him.

"Well, he is dead lucky!" said Merriwell. "He is a year ahead of me, and so he has had a chance to meet

good people. A freshman never gets a show. Next year comes the junior prom."

He wandered back toward South Middle, and all the way a pair of beautiful eyes seemed looking into his. When the campus was reached he shook himself, forcing a laugh.

"One would think you had never seen a girl before, old man!" he murmured. "You act lovesick! Get a brace on!"

He came upon a little party that was discussing football matters and stopped to listen. He did not take much part in the conversation, answering when addressed, but advancing no ideas.

Perhaps twenty minutes were passed in this manner, and then he went on again. He had not walked far before he heard a quick step behind him and felt a heavy hand fall on his shoulder.

CHAPTER III.

ANOTHER FOE.

The touch was not friendly and Frank whirled instantly. He found himself confronted by Evan Hartwick, whose face wore anything but a pleasant expression.

"Look here, Merriwell," said Hartwick, savagely. "I've a bone to pick with you!"

Frank was surprised, but he remained cool and unruffled.

"Well, sir," he said, looking Hartwick straight in the eye, "what is it?"

"I want you to apologize for the manner in which you addressed Miss Lee and Miss Darley, sir."

Frank fell back a step and his brow darkened.

"You want me to apologize?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why should I apologize?"

"Because you insulted them, sir."

Merriwell's eyes seemed to look straight through Hartwick, and his voice was hard and even as he deliberately said:

"If you say I insulted those young ladies you lie, sir."

There could be no mistaking Merriwell's meaning. Certainly his words were plain enough. He showed that he was ready to back them up if necessary.

Hartwick's hands clinched, and he drew his breath through his teeth sharply. His face showed all the hatred for Merriwell that he had kept subdued so long.

"If it wasn't for the disgrace of having a row with you I would strangle you on the spot!" he grated.

Frank snapped his fingers.

"Anybody could say that," he returned. "You might find doing it quite a different thing, Hartwick."

"You refuse to apologize?"

"I have nothing for which to apologize, sir."

"I saw you speak to them."

"What if you did? One of the young ladies dropped a letter and I simply returned it to her."

"They both say you were insulting in your words and actions."

"They say that?"

"Yes."

"I do not believe you, sir."

Hartwick started forward a bit, his white, clinched teeth showing between his slightly parted lips.

"You insolent dog!" he panted. "I have half a mind to——"

"Better make it a whole mind and try it on. You can't tell what will happen to you till you do."

Frank was watching Hartwick's every move, ready to promptly meet anything he might attempt. He did not fancy Evan would carry the matter very far there and then, but he realized well enough that he had suddenly and unexpectedly aroused another enemy.

"Not now," said Hartwick after a moment. "I may see you again. If you ever dare address either of those young ladies again I'll choke the life out of your body!"

Then he whirled and strode away.

Frank stood watching Hartwick till he disappeared, then he muttered:

"I believe the whole thing is a severe case of jealousy on his part. If I am not mistaken he is stuck on one of those girls, and that's what ails him. They must have said something about me that put him in such a mood. I wonder what it could have been?"

He knew well enough that the matter was not ended. In fact, he did not intend to let it drop there. He had been accused of insulting a young lady, and he must exonerate himself.

Straightway Frank went to his room, sat down, and after much trouble and the destroying of several sheets of paper, he wrote the following brief note:

“NEW HAVEN, CONN., Sept. 18.

“MY DEAR MISS LEE: I trust you will pardon me for addressing you, but I have been accused by Mr. Evan Hartwick of insulting you upon the street to-day. You will remember that I simply returned to you a letter you had dropped, doing so in a manner that I believed perfectly courteous and gentlemanly; yet Mr. Hartwick has told me to my face that you said I was insolent in my language and manner. If it is not asking too much I hope you will exonerate me in this, as I do not relish the odium of having insulted a lady.

“Most respectfully yours,

“FRANK MERRIWELL.

“To Miss Winifred Lee,

“City.”

Frank lost no time in mailing this note.

That evening he told Harry about the affair. Rattleton grew excited immediately.

“Confound the blooming cad!” he cried. “Why didn’t you jack him in the smaw—I mean smack him in the jaw? That’s what he needed! Why, I know of this Miss Lee. She is a star! Her old man’s got government bonds to use for kindling. Hartwick has been trying to get in there for some time. Don’t know how successful he has been, but he keeps hanging around. Said you insulted her? Poly hoker! That makes me hotter than a cake of ice!”

"Keep cool, old man, and we will see if Miss Lee is gracious enough to answer my note. If she does——"

"And she says Hartwick lied——"

"Hartwick swallows his words or he and I will disturb the peace."

"That's the talk, Merry! I hope you'll knock the everlasting stuffing out of him!"

The next day Frank received an answer from Winifred Lee. He tore open the envelope with some haste and read the following brief but highly satisfactory communication:

"DEAR MR. MERRIWELL: I think there must be some misunderstanding concerning the matter of which you wrote, and I assure you that I regard your conduct and words in returning to me the letter I dropped as courteous and gentlemanly in every way. I did not tell Mr. Hartwick that you were insolent, but both Miss Darley and myself spoke of you as having been very gracious and polite. I am sure there is a misunderstanding.

"Sincerely yours,

"WINIFRED LEE.

"To Mr. Frank Merriwell,

"City."

"That settles it!" muttered Frank. "I did not think Hartwick could have any grounds for such an outrageous charge."

He showed the answer to Rattleton, who, having read it, grimly said:

"That explains the whole business. The girls spoke of you in a complimentary manner, and Hartwick was insanely jealous."

"Well, I propose to make him take water or fight! This is more than I can endure! There is no other way to settle the matter, for it must be settled without bringing Miss Lee's name into the affair. Be careful, old fellow, and not mention her as in any way connected with any trouble that may arise between Hartwick and myself."

"Don't worry about that. I rather think I have good sense enough not to do a thing like that."

All that day Frank looked for a good opportunity to get Hartwick aside, where what passed between them would not be heard by others. In this he was not successful. Hartwick pretended to be utterly unaware of Merriwell's presence on the earth.

"He can't work that racket," thought Frank. "I am going to call him to account, and that without delay."

After supper Frank and Harry set out to look for Hartwick. It was near ten o'clock when they found him in Morey's, a popular resort for students. Evan was drinking with several of his particular friends, but Frank did not hesitate about addressing him.

Walking up to the table at which his enemy sat, Frank calmly said:

"Mr. Hartwick, I would like to speak in private with you."

Evan slowly put down his glass of ale, deliberately turned, and surveyed Merriwell from head to feet in the most aggravating and insolent manner.

"What have you to say to me?" he asked, as if Frank were a cur.

Merriwell held his temper.

"I told you, sir, that I wished to speak with you in private."

"I do not care to have anything to say to you in private."

"But it is a matter which we cannot publicly discuss."

"Then I do not care to discuss it."

"That will not go. It concerns a certain person whose name neither of us should mention here. You have charged me with insulting that person."

"Well?"

"Well, sir, I have in my possession a letter that is positive proof that you lied."

Hartwick leaped to his feet.

"What!" he cried. "Do you dare tell me this? Why, I will——"

"Steady, old man," warned one of his friends, while others crowded around. "Consider where you are."

"But this—this creature has called me a liar!" fumed Evan. "Stand aside! Let me get at him!"

One of the party spoke earnestly and guardedly to Hartwick, who seemed to cool down in a remarkable manner while he listened. When his friend had finished Hartwick said:

"You are right, Walker, I cannot afford to get into a saloon row with such a person. I don't think I can afford to fight him, anyway, and so all I can do is ignore him."

"But you have lied about me, and if you have any blood in your body you must fight," declared Frank.

Hartwick sat down, as if quite unaware that Merriwell was near.

"A man can't afford to dirty his hands on some creatures," he said, loftily.

"I see that you do not have the courage to fight," said Frank as he drew off his left glove. "You are ready to grasp at anything to avoid the encounter. Well, sir, there is such a thing as fixing matters so you can only refuse to fight by publicly acknowledging yourself a coward."

And then, like a flash, he slapped Hartwick on the cheek with the glove he had just removed.

Evan shot up like a rocket, but he was instantly grasped, while several placed themselves between the two.

Frank Merriwell remained as cool as ice, serenely drawing off his other glove. One of Hartwick's friends made some threatening talk, to which Merriwell calmly returned:

"After I have done with Mr. Hartwick, if he leaves me in condition, I will do my best to give you satisfaction. At present my quarrel is with Hartwick, not you, sir."

Rattleton said not a word, but he was at Frank's right hand, ready to take part if necessary.

But fighting was one of the things that was not allowed in Morey's, and both lads were warned against it.

"I don't care about fighting him here," said Frank, "but I will meet him at any time and place he may name."

"You shall regret this!" grated Hartwick. "You'll wish you'd never met me! I'll fix you!"

Frank simply smiled.

That was the end of the affair in Morey's. Frank expected to hear from Hartwick immediately, but three days passed and Evan showed no inclination to bring about the encounter.

"Well," said Merriwell, "if he lets it drop now, I am

satisfied. It seemed like playing the bully, but I was forced to do what I did."

"That's so," nodded Rattleton. "If you hadn't you would have shown the white feather."

Frank chanced to come face to face with Winifred Lee on the street. He wondered if she would recognize him, but he was not prepared for the flashing look of disdain which she gave him. It almost took away his breath and filled him with consternation and wonder.

"What can it mean?" he thought. "What have I done now that she should look at me in that way?"

He was bewildered, and he grew more so the longer he thought the matter over. It became plain to him that the girl had given him a genuine look of contempt, but what he had done to merit it was more than he could understand.

So Frank kept about his training for the football team, working hard all the time, and having hopes of being chosen for some position.

Frank was a great sprinter, a fact which Old Man Hickson had found out to his satisfaction. Hickson had seen Merriwell play baseball, and he had seen him make two bags out of a single and three bags out of a two-bag hit simply by his wonderful speed in going

around the bases. Frank had a wonderful way of leaping off at a high speed from a standstill.

The crowd of aspirants kept thinning down, but still Merriwell, Halliday and Hartwick were retained. Indeed, in making up the teams for practice play Old Man Hickson fell to giving Merriwell the position of half-back with promising regularity.

Frank allowed nothing to interfere with his practice and his studies, but it happened that both he and Harry were invited to a swell german that was to be the beginning of the season in New Haven society, and they felt it a duty to show themselves, if they did not stay.

They went, immaculate in evening dress and chokers, and it happened that almost the first person Frank saw on arriving was Winifred Lee. She saw him, too, and she gave him a queer look that was half an invitation, and Frank instantly resolved to remain.

He lost little time in seeking for an introduction to Winifred, and he was successful in obtaining what he desired. Her card showed the lancers had not been taken, and Frank begged the privilege of dancing that set with her.

"Well, I don't know," she said, looking at him severely. "I think I ought not to give it to you."

"Indeed, and why not?" exclaimed Frank. "What have I done to deserve a refusal?"

"You should know that most young ladies do not care to have their names mentioned in connection with a saloon quarrel," said Winifred, and Frank felt the sting of her eyes and her manner.

"I don't think I understand you," he said, slowly, "but I assure you, Miss Lee, I have never mentioned your name in any saloon."

"Really! How about your little encounter with Mr. Hartwick in a place called Morey's?"

"I give you my word of honor that your name was not mentioned by either of us. That I can prove, Miss Lee."

She looked at him earnestly.

"You seem to be speaking the truth," she said, with unconventional frankness.

"I assure you that I am. If anybody has ever stated to you that I ever mentioned your name in any public place, that person has told you what is not true."

Something like a light of relief swept over her face, and she suddenly held out her hand.

"I believe you, Mr. Merriwell," she declared. "You have a face that is all truth and honesty. If I had known you better, I could not have thought such a thing possible of you. I have asked a certain party not to have anything further to say to you, in order that no quarrel might arise over me."

"I am sure I know the person to whom you refer. I did meet him in Morey's. I went there to look for him, as I do not drink myself. I told him that I had positive proof that he lied when he said I insulted a certain person and that person said so. That was as near as your name came to being mentioned, Miss Lee."

Frank released her hand, which he had held as long as he dared. He saw Evan Hartwick, his face dark as a stormcloud, watching them. The girl saw Hartwick and she passed her hand through Frank's arm.

"Yes," she said, "I will dance the lancers with you."

CHAPTER IV.

BEWITCHING EYES.

Evan Hartwick saw Frank walk away with Winifred Lee clinging to his arm, and Hartwick's heart was filled with the most tumultuous and bitter passions. His lips were white, but there was a dark look on his corrugated brow and his hands were clinched.

"This is more than I can stand!" he muttered. "That infernal fellow has crossed my path once too often! I must fix him some way—and I will! But how?"

Hartwick meditated. A wild project flashed through his brain, but there seemed no possible way of carrying it into execution.

"Oh, if it could be done!" muttered Hartwick, striking his hands together. "That would shame and disgrace Merriwell more than anything else that could befall him."

The more Evan thought of his scheme the greater became his longing to carry it into execution. He caught a glimpse of a face in the moving throng of smiling men and lads and dazzling women and girls.

"There is one who would give me a helping hand,"

he thought—"one who would do anything for me. By Jove! I believe it can be done! I'll try it!"

A few moments later Hartwick was looking for a cab outside. He found one, told the driver to take him to the nearest drug store, sprang in, and was whirled away.

In a short time Hartwick was back again, mingling with the merry throng and looking for the one who would do his underhand work.

The lancers over, Merriwell chatted with Winifred till another partner claimed her; but when she left him he had made her promise to give him a certain waltz.

Frank was more than charmed with the beautiful girl. He had found her intelligent, bright and witty, as well as pretty, which is a somewhat rare combination in a girl of eighteen.

They had arrived at a very good understanding, but she had insisted that he should not seek to settle with Hartwick for misrepresenting him.

It was not an easy thing for Frank to give such a promise, but under the spell of Winifred's witching eyes he could be led to do almost anything, and so she exacted the pledge.

"She is a queen, and that's right," thought Frank, as he wandered from the ballroom. "It has been a

long time since I have seen a girl who could be compared with her."

"Hello! hello!" said Halliday's familiar voice in Frank's ear. "What are you muttering about, my boy?"

"Was I muttering? I was not aware of it."

"Oh, I know!" grinned Halliday. "I saw her! Why, she is out of sight! But there are others. Come with me. I want to introduce you to her friend."

"Her friend?"

"Yes. Eunice Darley."

"Oh! Miss Darley. The one who was with her the first time I saw her. A pretty girl, if I remember correctly. I don't mind."

Halliday led Frank into a room where refreshments were being served. Young men, ladies and girls were sitting about, chatting and laughing, while they ate ice cream, cake, or drank of a certain beverage that was pleasing to the eye and seemed agreeable to the taste.

"What's this—what's this?" muttered Frank in Halliday's ear. "What are they drinking? Looks like 'velvet.'"

"Oh, it is punch, so mild and harmless that it would not harm a child. I know, for I have tried it."

"No punch in mine," declared Frank.

Halliday led Merriwell over to a table where Browning was sitting with two girls. The girls were eating cream, while Browning was lazily sipping punch and talking to them in a drawling but not unmusical voice.

"Mr. Merriwell," said Halliday, "I take pleasure in making you acquainted with Miss Darley and Miss Stone."

The girls bowed, and Eunice Darley gave Frank a wonderful look with her big black eyes. She had full red lips and a rather handsome face. Her eyes, however, were what attracted instant attention, and she knew how to use them in a manner most effective.

Miss Stone was small, quiet and not particularly attractive.

"Sit down, Merriwell," invited Browning. "We have been speaking of you."

"Of me? Well, you know the old saying——"

"About angels?" smiled Eunice Darley.

"Not in this case," murmured Bruce. "That saying applies to quite another fellow, you know."

"Oh, if what I have heard of Mr. Merriwell is true, you cannot compare him with the 'other fellow,'" laughed Eunice.

"Oh, I don't know," said Bruce. "In some ways he is a perfect 'other fellow' of a fellow."

Frank sat down, and Halliday excused himself, strolling away.

"Now, I don't think it is kind of Mr. Browning to make you out as bad as all that, Mr. Merriwell," said Eunice, with pretended seriousness. "Why, I have even heard it said that you do not drink anything—not so much as beer."

"No," declared Browning, "he takes his milk reduced and has to have his water sweetened. Didn't I say he is a perfect 'other fellow' of a fellow?"

"But he can play baseball," said Miss Stone. "I have seen him play, and I know."

"Oh, he has the nerve to make a bluff at anything," nodded Bruce. "He even played me when we were in different classes. He took all the ambition out of me and made me the total wreck that I am. I wonder if I can have some more of that lemonade? It is very soothing."

"But there is claret or something in it, is there not?" said Eunice.

"Is there? Well, if you hadn't told me I'd never suspected it. Won't you have some, girls?"

"Are you sure it is all right?" asked Miss Stone, timidly.

"No, it isn't all right," replied Bruce, sadly. "If

they had put something stimulating in it, it would have been. However, it is wet."

"In that case, we will all try it," smiled Eunice Darley.

"None for me," laughed Frank. "I don't care for it."

Eunice turned on him with a merry laugh, her eyes full of subtle allurements and reproaches.

"Oh, Mr. Merriwell! would you put me to shame in that way? I know you will not refuse to drink a single glass of it with me. I am certain it cannot harm anybody, else Mrs. Greydon would not have it here for us to drink. It is simply lemonade, with something in it to color it. One glass with me, Mr. Merriwell."

It was hard to refuse her, and Frank felt the blood rushing to his cheeks. Her voice was enough to unsteady him, but her eyes really seemed to possess hypnotic influence.

"I trust you will not be offended, Miss Darley," he said, as firmly as he could, "but I have made a vow never to touch a drop of liquor in any form. You would not have me break that vow, I am sure—not even to please you?"

She fell back, and there was a look of disappointment on her face.

"A fellow must be foolish to make such a vow," she declared, with a toss of her head.

"I do not know. Miss Darley, you do not understand the circumstances. If you did——"

"Oh, well, never mind! We will try Mr. Browning's 'lemonade,' and you shall drink with us—in water. Shall we order it sweetened?"

Frank was touched, but he held himself strongly in check and answered:

"I will drink a glass of water with you, by way of keeping you company, if that will be sufficient."

"Oh, that will do very well!" laughed the dark-eyed girl. "But you must be careful that you do not get intoxicated on it!"

The punch was brought and a glass of water was placed before Frank. Eunice suddenly leaned toward him, her eyes looking into his as she softly said:

"Will you forgive me, Mr. Merriwell?"

"Forgive you—for what?"

"For being hateful. Mr. Browning had just told us you would not touch anything in which you knew there was a drop of liquor, and I thought I would try to induce you to do so. I failed and I am glad of it. I admire a man who has the courage to keep his vows under any circumstances."

More than ever before he felt the influence of her

eyes. He had never seen such eyes before that, and the thought flashed through his mind that Eunice Darley could do an incredible amount of harm or an unlimited amount of good with those eyes, as she saw fit.

"Thank you!" he murmured, gratefully. "I did not wish to offend you by refusing, but I——"

"Do not say anything more about it. I think I understand."

Browning was chatting with Miss Stone, and neither of them was paying much attention to Frank and Eunice. Frank felt her hand touch his for a moment.

"You have such wonderful eyes!" he murmured, despite himself.

"Do you think so?" she smiled. "A little while ago you seemed to find something attractive in Winnie Lee's eyes."

"Miss Lee is a most charming and beautiful girl."

"Indeed she is, and she is my dearest friend. I would do anything for her. We are great chums, you know."

"The first time I saw you you were together."

"I remember—the day you returned the letter to her she dropped. Winnie said then that she thought you the handsomest fellow she had ever seen."

"Really?"

"Really and truly."

"I am not going to give my opinion of her. I fear it would be so complimentary that it would sound soft from the lips of a fellow who has known her no longer than I have."

"Come, come, Merry," broke in the lazy voice of Bruce Browning, "your water will lose its head if you let it stand longer. And you will lose your head if you do not stop looking into Miss Darley's eyes like that," he added.

"A toast," smiled Eunice, lifting her glass. "Here's to Mr. Merriwell; may he never forget his vows. Drink! drink!"

Frank drank the glass of water, and Hartwick's plot had been carried out successfully.

CHAPTER V.

DISASTER.

"Mr. Rattleton, have you seen anything of Mr. Merriwell? I promised him this waltz and I haven't seen him since."

"Come with me, Miss Lee," said Harry, who had succeeded in obtaining an introduction to Winifred, "and we will look for him."

They found Frank in the room where refreshments had been served. The room was almost deserted, and Merriwell was resting his head on his arms, which were laying on a table. Before him were several glasses, a little punch in the bottom of each.

Harry did not realize the situation until they were close upon Frank, and then he tried to turn about the girl and get out of the room, saying:

"He is not here."

"Oh, yes, he is!" said Winifred. "He is there at that table. What can be the matter? Why—is it—is it possible? I—I thought Mr. Merriwell never drank!"

She was shocked, and there was something like a blow in her voice.

"Oh, he has not been drinking—I am ced durtain—I

mean dead certain of that!" spluttered Harry as he grasped Frank's shoulder and gave him a shake. "Come, old man, what are you doing here?"

Merriwell made no move, and Harry gave him another shake.

"What's the matter, old man?" cried Rattleton in a flutter of consternation. "Are you ill?"

He gave Frank such a shaking that Merriwell lifted his head slowly, stared in a stupid manner, and mumbled something.

"Yes," said Winifred, cuttingly, "it is evident that he is very ill. His condition shows that."

"I am positive he has not dropped a drink—I mean dinked a drip—er, no, dripped a drunk!" said Harry, getting sadly mixed in his haste to defend his friend.

"He may not have drank a drop," said the girl, "but it is plain that he has taken several drops. What a spectacle!"

Then she turned and swept away. Merriwell seemed to see her departing, and he made a desperate attempt to say something, but his words were incoherent.

"Oh, Lord! oh, Lord!" gasped Harry. "He has done it this time, and that is sure! This is terrible! I must get him out of here some way. It is almost certain to produce a dreadful scandal. It may mean a long vacation for Merry."

Even Rattleton believed that Frank had been indulging in punch until he was intoxicated.

"Oh, you're a dandy!" he hissed in Frank's ear. "Is this the sort of a place you select to get loaded? For Heaven's sake, get a brace on! I must drag you out some way. We can't go out by the front door."

"Doctor!" said Frank, thickly—"want a doctor."

"Well, you shall have one when I get you to our rooms. Here, Griswold!" he called as he caught a glimpse of Danny, "for the good of loveness—I mean the love of goodness, come here and give me a hand!"

Griswold came in and whistled his astonishment when he saw Frank.

"Jee whiskers!" he exclaimed. "It's Merry—and loaded! Why, I never heard of such a thing before!"

"Nobody else!" grated Rattleton. "Get hold of that side—quick! I think I know where the back door is. We must take him out that way, if we have to scale a fence to escape from the yard! Now brace up, Merriwell—come! Oh, say, old fellow, why don't you do it?"

Griswold took hold, and Rattleton shook Frank till the overcome lad made an effort to get on his feet. They almost carried him from the room. Of course it was quite impossible to entirely escape notice. Not a few people stared at them and some remarks were

made. Harry blushed with shame over his friend's disgrace. In truth it was awful.

After some trouble they found the back door and got Frank outside. The air seemed to revive him in a measure, and they found a gate that led them out of the yard. In time they passed through to the street that lay behind the house.

"Merry'll never get over this!" Rattleton almost sobbed. "I don't understand it—don't see how it was possible! I tasted of that punch, and it would take a barrel of it to get a baby full. He must have had something besides punch."

"No punch!" mumbled Merriwell. "Water—nothin' else."

"This is the first time I ever knew a fellow to get loaded on water," said Griswold. "Never supposed it was intoxicating."

"Not 'toxicated," declared Frank, with an effort to brace up.

"Then what is the matter with you?"

"Dunno. Sleepy—no strength—played out."

"You don't suppose he has had some kind of a fit, do you?" eagerly asked Rattleton, catching at the hope as a drowning man catches at a straw.

"Naw!" replied Griswold. "Fellows like him never have fits."

Danny took charge of Frank while Harry went for a cab. When the cab arrived Frank was bundled in, and away they went for South Middle. Harry let down both windows, and the cool night air brought Frank around still more.

They did not have much trouble in getting Merriwell up to his rooms, and by that time he was begging them to go for a physician.

"I've been poisoned!" he finally declared. "I know it!"

That startled Rattleton. Danny promised to remain with Frank and Harry rushed away for a physician. The doctor came after a while, and as Harry had declared that his friend might be poisoned, he brought a stomach pump.

The contents of Merriwell's stomach were pumped up, and then the physician gave him some medicine. Frank remained in a semi-stupor and soon fell asleep.

"I can't quite make out what is the matter with him," confessed the doctor, "but it is certain that he was not intoxicated."

"Hurrah!" cried Rattleton, delightedly. "That is a relief! But is he in danger, doctor?"

"I hardly think so, but it will be a good plan to keep him moving for a while. Walk him up and down the

room till he appears brighter. It may be that something he ate was the cause of this."

"Can you settle the point, doctor?"

"By an analysis, yes."

"Then make it. You shall be well paid for it, I promise you. His honor depends upon it. Why, he was taken this way at a swell party, and everybody who saw him believed him drunk. It may mean expulsion from college for him if it cannot be proven that he was not intoxicated."

The physician promised to make a full analysis, told the boys how to treat Frank, asked them to call him again if the patient showed any alarming symptoms, and then departed.

Rattleton and Griswold walked Frank up and down the room till the unfortunate lad showed signs of coming around all right and was so that he could get along with the assistance of one. Then Griswold hastened back to the party to get their overcoats and hats, for they had not waited to obtain them before leaving.

Merriwell did not seem to feel like talking. There was a pained expression on his face, and he seemed trying to think. Rattleton kept asking him how he felt, and he answered with a single word:

"Better."

Harry tried to question him about the affair, but

Frank put his hand to his head and looked bewildered, so Rattleton decided to drop it till morning.

After Harry had aided Frank to remove his clothes and had helped him into bed, he sat down and waited till Griswold returned.

Frank was sleeping when Danny came in.

"Well, I suppose everybody is onto this wretched business?" said Harry, impatiently.

"Oh, I don't know," answered Danny. "A few of the fellows seem to know of it, but I'm inclined to think we got him out so quick that it was not generally known. Of course I had to make excuses, and I did the best I could. Halliday came and asked me if it was true that Merriwell was drunk, and I told him no."

"It's a blooming shame!" declared Harry, "and I don't understand it at all. You know, as well as I, what Merry's reputation and record are."

"What does he say about it?"

"Nothing yet. I'll find out in the morning what he has to say."

Frank was sleeping. Nearly all the night Rattleton sat beside the bed and watched over his friend. He did not lie down till he felt certain that Frank was in no further danger.

In the morning Frank was so ill that he could not

get out of bed. He tried it, but his head swam and he gave it up.

"What happened last night, Harry?" he asked, dolefully. "I feel as if I had been on a tear."

"I want to know what happened myself," said Ratleton. "We went to a party, and——"

"How did we get home?"

"Griswold and I brought you home in a cab."

"A cab? Brought me home? I remember something about it. I remember seeing her looking at me. Oh, there was such shame and horror in her face! I tried to tell her something, but my tongue would not let me speak. Say, Harry, is it all a horrible dream?"

"Not much! It is a horrible reality. Now I want you to explain it. I found you in the room where the punch was served, and you seemed to be loaded. There were one or two servants in the place, and you were lying on the table."

Frank put his hand to his head.

"I was with Browning, Miss Stone and Miss Darley," muttered Frank. "Halliday took me down to introduce me to Miss Darley. She had such bewildering eyes. She asked me to drink and I declined. They drank, but I took nothing but water."

"I'd like to know where they found that water!" exploded Harry.

"I give you my word that I took nothing else," came earnestly from Frank. "After that we sat there and talked a few moments. Then Miss Darley urged us all to go somewhere with her—I do not remember just where. I was feeling stupid and I begged to be excused. They went off and left me, and after that everything seems mixed."

Harry took a turn up and down the room.

"I am more than ever inclined to think there was something crooked about the affair!" he cried. "Do you remember that there was a physician here to see you last night?"

"I seem to remember something about it."

"I want to know what he has to say to-day. You stay right in bed. I'll send him around. Hang chapel! I believe I smell blood! If there has been monkey business with you——"

"But who would try it? Surely not Browning?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, I will not think it was Browning!"

"Well, we'll try to find out who it was. Heavens! just think of it, Frank! It begins to look as if you were poisoned! There goes the chapel bell! I'm off!"

Harry dashed out of the room.

CHAPTER VI.

MERRIWELL'S MISFORTUNE.

Of course the story could not be suppressed; but Harry Rattleton was not idle, and the doctor's certificate of illness plainly stated that Merriwell had been overcome by a certain drug. How that drug happened to be in Frank's stomach was a mystery.

Frank did not escape being compelled to tell his story to certain of the faculty. He was questioned closely, but he insisted that he had not even touched liquor in any form to his lips, and he did not waver in his statement. The physician's certificate did not seem sufficient to entirely satisfy them, for it was certainly most remarkable that a student should be drugged under such circumstances and be quite unable to tell who did it.

Merriwell was informed that his previous good character had much to do with the fact that he was let off with a warning, and he had the satisfaction of knowing that his statement, to which he was ready to swear, was regarded with grave doubts.

In short, for all of anything Rattleton had done,

for all of Frank's word, for all of the physician's certificate, Merriwell remained under a cloud.

"I will know the truth about the matter some day," he declared over and over. "Halliday took me down to meet Miss Darley; Browning sat at the table with us; Halliday is jealous of me because we are rivals for a place on the eleven, and Browning was once my open foe. Still I am not willing to believe either of them concerned in a plot to knock me out in such a cowardly manner.

"It seems that after Browning and the girls left me I heard the voices of two other persons who came to the table where I was. It is like a dream, but still I am almost certain I did hear such voices. One said something about Merriwell being done for this time, and the other laughed. Who were they? I would give a good round sum to know.

"I'll not drop this matter. I do not propose to remain under the shadow of suspicion. I had rather a man would shoot me or stab me openly than strike me such a dastardly blow in the dark! I have no chance to defend myself. I know beyond a doubt that I have the most bitter enemies here at Yale. Ditson is one of them, but although he was there that night he had no opportunity to drug me. Well, the truth must come out some time."

Frank kept silent and attended to his studies and his football practice. He seemed determined to keep up in recitations and still make the eleven.

He remembered that he had promised to waltz with Winifred Lee, and he wondered what she had thought of him when she heard the story about him, as she must have heard it.

One day he spoke of this to Harry, and something about Rattleton's face caused Frank to ask questions.

"Oh, I may as well tell you," said Rattleton. "She saw you."

"Saw me?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"When you were sprawled out on that table, apparently loaded for big game."

Frank groaned.

"How did that happen?" he asked.

"Well, she could see nothing of you when the waltz came around. It is plain enough that she had set her mind on waltzing with you, for she asked me where you were. I offered to take her to you, and I did——"

"Hey? What's that? You took her into the room where I was spraddled out on that table?"

"I had that pleasure."

Frank grabbed Harry by the throat.

"Confound you!" he cried. "Were you leagued against me also?"

"Take your neck off my hands—I mean your hands off my neck! I didn't know what condition you were in. I looked into that room a short time before, and you were chatting with Eunice Darley. You were all right then."

Frank placed both his hands to his head.

"Suffering goodness!" he murmured. "To think that she should see me! What must she think of me!"

He soon found out, for he met Winifred on the street. This time she was with Eunice Darley, as she had been on the occasion of their first meeting. It was too late to avoid them when Merriwell observed them, and so he was forced to go forward boldly. He felt the hot blood rising to his face despite himself.

Frank lifted his hat. The girls looked straight at him for a single instant and then coldly turned away.

Merriwell felt his heart give a great leap, and then it seemed to stop beating for several moments. The flush left his face and he was deathly pale.

"So they, too, think that I was drunk!" he muttered, bitterly. "I swear this is pretty hard to bear!"

For the remainder of the day he was in a most wretched condition. Before he slept he wrote a letter of explanation to Winifred, in which he told her the

simple truth, declared he would prove it some day, and entreated her to believe him.

That letter was not answered.

To a young man of Merriwell's proud and sensitive disposition the position was intensely humiliating. However, he bore up under it as best he could; but his companions saw a great change in him.

The weeks went on and he successfully made the eleven. He was given the position of right half-back, and played it so well that his work was a feature in the minor games.

Hartwick failed entirely and Halliday was retained as substitute.

Princeton's work against other teams was watched with the greatest interest. Early in the season she seemed weak, for she scored but one against the Carlisle Indians, and the Newton Athletic Association gave her a hot game.

But the aspect of all this changed somewhat when Yale went against the Indians and found them royal opponents. Only by the fiercest work did Yale hold the bucks down and finally win the game.

Newton Athletic Association did not play Yale, so there was no opportunity to judge Yale's strength by comparison in that case.

One of Yale's coaches came out in a statement in a

New York paper, however, and confessed that the team was disappointing in many ways. He also hinted that Princeton was strong in kicking and could go through and stop kicks in a manner that made them specially dangerous. The coming battle on Manhattan Field was sure to be a royal struggle.

Dartmouth came down from the granite hills, and she gave Yale a hot go during the first half. The Dartmouth lads were full of sand, and being mostly the sons of farmers and country gentlemen, they were a big, sturdy set, every man ready to die game.

In the second half Yale took a brace and won by stiff, snappy play that was decidedly encouraging to her admirers. Then Yale's stock went up again.

Although Merriwell showed himself capable of good work, he was scarcely mentioned in any of the newspaper reports. It almost seemed as if he was deliberately overlooked, and this was not easy, considering his position. When it was necessary to mention him his work was said to be fairly satisfactory, but not up to that of the man who had played the same position on the Yale team the previous year.

Old Man Hickson, however, took it on himself to say a kindly word to Frank, for all that he was sometimes harshly critical.

In the Dartmouth game Frank saw Winifred Lee

among the spectators. A glimpse of her face was enough to nerve him to play for all there was in him, but he was not given any special opportunity to distinguish himself from the other players.

Then came the report that Frank was to be dropped from the team. How it started no one seemed able to say, but it was widely circulated, and it aroused hundreds of heated discussions as to Merriwell's merits.

If Frank was annoyed he did not show it. If he wondered as to the truth of the report he did not show it. He kept his mouth shut and went on with his work as if he had heard nothing.

But he was not dropped.

October slipped away and the time of the great game in New York drew near. Still the eleven that would represent Yale had not been definitely settled upon. New men were being tried and changes were made.

Again one of the coaches wrote an article for a New York Sunday paper, in which he confessed that the situation was complicated and most unsatisfactory. He pointed out Yale's weak points. This time Merriwell was mentioned. While he was not regarded as weak, the coach claimed that there had been better half-backs at Yale.

That was enough to arouse Frank thoroughly. If

there had been better men in the past he would, at least, do his level best.

Then he was injured in one of the minor games. His left knee was hurt so he could not run, and the doctor said he might not recover entirely for many weeks.

Frank was in despair. Was it possible that after all his work he was going to be deprived of the opportunity of playing against Princeton?

Halliday was tried in his place and then was taken out and placed in the line. It seemed that this shifting about of the team must mean that Merriwell was out of it for good. Frank longed to ask Old Man Hickson some questions, but Hickson was peculiar and he refrained. With the aid of a crutch at first he hobbled about. Then he discarded the crutch and got about with a cane.

Never was a sick child cared for more tenderly than that knee. Hot water was used upon it several times a day. It was bathed with liniments and carefully bandaged. The doctor did not believe in letting it remain perfectly idle, as he said it might stiffen up somewhat, and he believed moderate exercise was better than absolute rest.

Harry sympathized with Frank and did his best to encourage him by saying he was certain to be in con-

dition to play against Princeton. At the time Rat-
tleton was saying so he doubted it very much. It
seemed to him that the new arrangement of the team
would shut Frank out, even if the knee did get into
fairly good condition.

There were those who secretly rejoiced at Merri-
well's misfortune. It seemed that hard luck had struck
him full and fair at last.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT EUNICE SAID.

"Say, old man," said Rattleton to Merriwell one day, "that fellow Hartwick is playing some sort of a queer game."

"How do you mean?" asked Frank, curiously.

"Why, I can't tell whether he is stuck on Winifred Lee or Eunice Darley. He has them both on the string."

"The chances are he is looking after Miss Lee."

"Well, I am not so sure, for he has taken Eunice Darley out driving. I notice, however, that he pays his attentions to Miss Lee in the daytime, while Miss Darley went driving with him in the evening."

"It can't be that he has them both on the string, for they are firm friends, and he would queer himself."

"He is slicker than you think, old fellow. I have an idea that he is mashed on Miss Lee and Miss Darley is mashed on him."

"Well, it makes no difference to me. Neither of them recognizes me now, so Hartwick may have them both."

"Oh, I don't know! There are others besides Hartwick."

"Not you?"

"Well, I wouldn't mind having Eunice for my queen. She is a star of the first magnitude, Merry! Those eyes! My boy, there are not two more eyes like those in the whole wide world!"

"Whew!" whistled Frank. "I had no idea you were hit in this way. I will confess that she has wonderful eyes. Why don't you make a brace for her and cut Hartwick out?"

"Oh, I don't know why I don't! I am slow."

This was a revelation for Frank, as Harry had never seemed to care much for girls. Knowing Harry as he did, he wondered if Eunice Darley would not drop Hartwick for Rattleton in case she understood the latter's regard for her.

Frank's knee became so that he did not absolutely need the cane which he carried, but he still clung to it.

One evening as he was returning to South Middle, having been out to make a call, he observed a fellow and a girl on a corner. The girl was clinging to the fellow, who rudely tried to shake her off.

"Oh, quit this foolishness!" said a hoarse voice—a voice that sounded familiar to Frank. "I am tired of it!"

The girl said something in a low, agitated tone, and the fellow brushed her away.

"You want to quit now!" he growled. "I am tired of you!"

Of the girl's retort Frank caught but two words—"tell everything."

A fierce exclamation broke from the lips of the fellow, and he whirled on the girl in a threatening attitude.

That was enough for Frank. With natural chivalry he sprang forward, crying:

"Don't touch that lady!"

In a moment the girl drew a veil over her face, and the fellow wheeled about to face Frank, uttering a snarl of anger.

"What business is it to you?" the stranger cried. "Get out or I will punch your face!"

"I wish you would try it," shot back Merriwell. "Nothing would suit me better—nothing in the world."

"Then—you get it!"

The stranger struck straight and hard at Frank, who ducked to the right, dropped his cane, and hit the unknown on the jaw with his left.

It was a pretty knockdown blow.

Frank turned about to offer his protection to the girl, and was surprised to see she had slipped away and

vanished in the darkness. He stood looking for her a moment, and then, hearing a movement behind him, faced about.

Crack! Frank's own cane struck him a heavy blow on the head, and he was felled to the ground, where he lay, stunned.

"It's Merriwell!" grated a fierce voice as the stranger bent over him. "I hope I have cracked his head!"

Then he dropped the cane and made off.

Frank recovered in a few minutes and sat up. His head was ringing, and he found there was a large swelling upon it, but his soft hat had kept the cane from cutting his scalp.

"Well," muttered Merriwell when he had collected his thoughts, "I deserved that! I should have been watching the fellow all the while."

He found his cane and hat near at hand, picked them up, got upon his feet and walked slowly toward his rooms.

"If I am not greatly mistaken," he said, "I recognized the voice of that fine gentleman. I believe it was my very dear friend, Evan Hartwick!"

Frank wondered who the girl could have been and why she fled so quickly. He had not obtained a view of her face, and she had been so choked with emotion that she had not spoken in her natural tone of voice.

That night Frank slept with a wet towel bound upon the place where he had been struck by his own cane.

On the following day he met Eunice Darley as she was coming from the post office. To his amazement she stopped and spoke to him.

"I am so glad to see you!" she smiled, offering her hand and looking into his eyes with those wonderful orbs which he knew the power of so well.

Frank accepted her hand, and he noticed that she gave his fingers a gentle pressure, still smiling up at him with her eyes.

"I saw the game with Dartmouth," Eunice declared. "Oh, it was grand! And how magnificently you played! How you swept them down and trampled on them! It made me long to be a man and go to Yale. If I were a man I would play football."

"But you know it is a brutal game," murmured Frank, with pretended seriousness.

"I know there are lots of old foggy men and out-of-date women who are continually crying out about its being brutal; but they are away behind the times, that's all."

Frank smiled at her enthusiasm.

"I really believe you would like to play football," he said.

"Of course I would! I'd like to beat them down—to run over them! What sport is must be!"

"Why, she is a perfect little tigress!" thought Merriwell. "See the color in her cheeks! See her eyes gleam and her teeth glisten! She would delight in destroying."

"I am going to New York to see the game with Princeton," said Eunice. "They say it will be a frightful struggle. I hope so. You will not play, I suppose, since you hurt your knee?"

"I hope to, but I am afraid I shall not."

"I am so sorry about that! It seemed to me as if you were half the team. And your knee—how is it?"

"Better—much better."

"But it will not be well enough for you to play?"

"I think it will."

"Then you will play?" she eagerly cried, as if delighted.

"I am afraid not."

A cloud of disappointment dropped upon her face.

"How is that?"

"Well, since I have been laid off, my place has been given to Driscoll, and he is doing very well. The team is getting so it works together nicely, and it is not likely Driscoll will be taken out at the last moment just to give me a show."

"It's too bad!" pouted Eunice, and her eyes seemed to say that she really meant it. "You know I did not like you so very well after—after—well, till I saw you play in that game with Dartmouth. Then the way you smashed them right and left—the way you carried almost the whole Dartmouth crowd on your back and still went ahead, that changed me all about and made me like you very, very much. You were so brave—so desperate! Nothing seemed able to stop you at times."

Frank smiled.

"Well, I am glad something has led you to like me," he declared.

"Do you really care?" she softly asked, and her eyes drooped.

"Of course I care! You know very well the false position in which I was placed. It is possible you still believe I was intoxicated at Mrs. Greydon's——"

"I knew you were not!" she swiftly declared.

"You knew it?"

"Yes."

"How is that?"

Eunice betrayed confusion.

"I can't tell you now," she fluttered. "Sometime I may."

Frank was startled and aroused. Was it possible

this girl knew the truth concerning that wretched affair?

"I trust you will explain it," he said, earnestly, "You know that I still rest beneath a cloud. If you could clear that cloud away——"

"Wait," she said. "Wait a little. I cannot now, but I wish to be a friend to one who can play football as you do—one who can strike such a blow."

"If you will clear me so that Miss Lee will not believe that I am such a weak wretch——"

"Miss Lee?"

The girl's face fell and she did not seem pleased.

"Yes. You know I was engaged to waltz with her. She came and saw me lying on the table. She thought me intoxicated, and——"

"I know all about it; but it happens that we are not as good friends as we were. We have had a falling out."

"That is too bad!"

"Oh, I don't know as I care so much!" said the girl, with a toss of her head. "I am enjoying myself just as well as I did before."

Frank was disappointed, for he had hoped that Miss Darley's change of manner meant that Winifred Lee would come around also. He had hoped Eunice would aid him in restoring himself in Winifred's good graces,

but now he saw there was little chance of that. When he came to think over what the girl said he was greatly puzzled by her change of manner. What had she meant by saying she wished to be a friend to one who could strike such a blow? Then he remembered the fellow and girl on the dark corner. He had knocked the fellow down and the girl had fled.

Was it Eunice?

Was it true that this girl could tell something that would remove all suspicion that he had been intoxicated at the party? She had said she knew he was not intoxicated. How did she know it?

Frank saw her often after this meeting, and she remained very friendly. She even invited him to call, but he did not find the time to do so.

The date of the great match in New York approached. Merriwell had discarded his cane, and his knee seemed almost as well as ever. He ran and jumped with it. He took heavy exercises, and still it did not weaken.

Old Man Hickson observed this, and he asked Frank why he did not report for practice. Frank replied that he supposed he was laid off the team for good, but Hickson assured him this was not true.

"We want you as a substitute, at least," the captain declared. "Get out and practice, Merriwell."

So Merriwell resumed practice on those sharp November afternoons, and he went into the work with an energy that led Hickson to caution him against injuring himself again.

But Driscoll was retained on the eleven, and Halliday continued to do good work on the line. The eleven was finally whipped into shape for the game which was to be the event of the season, and Merriwell was retained as a substitute.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GREAT FOOTBALL GAME.

Every seat on Manhattan Field was taken; thousands were standing. The grand stand was festooned with bunting. The sun shone clear and bright. There were coaches brilliant with fashionable people. Everywhere were flags and horns. The vast crowd was a moving and tremendous silhouette against the sky.

A little negro boy came out and carried a collie around the field and over the chalkmarks. The collie had black and yellow about its neck.

In places there were great masses of blue flags packed together. In other places the yellow was seen. There was a great murmur of voices.

Suddenly a band blared forth. Princeton's cheers rolled over the field as the orange-and-black team trotted out.

The yellow flags fluttered and the horns tooted. Then it seemed that five hundred Princeton lads broke into the song, "The Orange and Black":

"Although Yale has always favored the violet's dark hue,
And the many sons of Harvard to the crimson rose are true,
We will hold a lily slender—no honor shall it lack
While the Tiger stands defender of the orange and the black.

"Through the long four years of college,
'Midst the scenes we love so well,
As we win athletic victories
On the football field or track,
Still we'll work for dear old Princeton
And the orange and the black."

The great shocks of hair bobbed around after the ball, and the spectators watched the practice with some interest, but more impatience. They were all grouped and consulting solemnly, when the Yale cheers pealed, blue seemed to flutter everywhere, and the Yale team came on at a quick run.

Yale took a short bit of practice, and the Yale crowd took a turn at singing to the tune of "Hold the Fort":

"Line up, rushers, line up briskly,
Line up with a will;
We have always beaten Princeton,
And we always will.

CHORUS:

"Hold the ball, Van Tassel's coming,
Hickson signals still;
Powell goes through the center,
Win we must and will!

"Bristol will try in vain the drop kick,
Coburn rushes through;
Murphy he is fun for Thornton,
Cross is looking blue.

"French and Halliday tackle surely,
One at either end;
Bannard he holds fast at center,
Bailey will not bend.

"Line up, rushers, line up briskly,
Line up with a will;
We have always beaten Princeton,
And we always will."

Merriwell was one of the seven substitutes who went to work warming up. He did not complain. He hoped to be in the game before the end came.

Hartwick was watching him from the dressing-rooms, and Roland Ditson was at his side. Ditson laughed sneeringly.

"I should think it would cut Merriwell to be only a substitute," he said. "He tries to be foremost in everything."

"He is blamed lucky to be a substitute!" growled Hartwick. "There was a time when it did not look as if he would be that."

"After he hurt his knee?"

"No. After he was found drunk at that party."

"But he wasn't drunk—he never drinks, you know."

"Well, that night he certainly drank—something."

"Say, old man," grinned Ditson, knowingly, "I believe you know what knocked Merriwell out that night. You know we placed the glasses around him so it would seem that he had been drinking lots of punch, and——"

"Dry up! The game is going to begin."

As Frank went out with the team he had caught a

glimpse of a familiar face—the face of Winifred Lee. It almost seemed that she looked straight at him and smiled, but he fancied he must be mistaken. That smile had been intended for some other fellow.

The toss-up had given Princeton choice, and advantage of sun and wind had been taken at the start-off. The signal was given, and then—plunk! The foot of Bristol, Princeton's full-back, sent the ball spinning into Yale's territory.

The game was on.

There was a flurry of blue, another punt, and the ball shot back at Princeton. Then the two masses rushed together, and there was a few seconds of hot work, another punt, and Princeton's left end was off side, so Yale got the ball in the middle of the field.

Without loss of time the old revolving wedge was tried against Princeton, but only a small gain was made, as Princeton showed its ability to tackle swift, hard and sure. In the midst of this a Princeton man was injured, but he was soon rubbed into shape and the game went on.

Merriwell was watching with breathless interest. He could feel his heart pounding in his bosom. How he longed to be in the midst of that work!

Again Yale tried the revolving wedge, but the teamwork of Princeton was marvelous and Yale could not

make a gain. In a few moments the ball was lost to Princeton on downs.

The very opening of the game showed that it was to be a fierce battle. Neither side had made a gain of any account. They were still fighting near the center of the field.

Then Strawbridge, Princeton's quarter-back, tried to go through with the pigskin. There was a furious jumble and Strawbridge emerged from the midst of it, but Halliday was in the right place and tackled him neatly, laying him low.

Yale spectators cheered at this. The gain had been of no consequence. An around-the-end play was tried, but that was not satisfactory.

Yale got the ball and forced it into Princeton's territory on short downs. Then a tandem play was tried and the Princeton line was broken, allowing Yale to carry the ball to Princeton's twenty-five-yard line before being stopped.

Evan Hartwick was shaking as he watched. He fell to cursing under his breath.

"If I have made a mistake in my judgment I am broke!" he grated. "I have figured all along that Princeton was bound to win this game. Every dollar I have in the world and all I could borrow is on this game. Princeton must win!"

Hartwick did not have the nerve of a gambler. His apprehensions were easily aroused.

Ditson grinned as he overheard Hartwick's words.

"What would the fellows say if they knew you bet against your own team?" he asked in a purring tone of voice.

"Curse the fellows!" snapped the other. "What right have you to be listening. Your ears are always open!"

But Yale was unable to hold the ground she had gained. Curtis was sent against Princeton's center. He shot forward like a rock from a catapult; he bounded back like a hand ball. There was another jumble and Princeton got the ball.

Once more Strawbridge tried Yale's center. He went through for a gain of ten yards. From that point the ball was steadily and surely forced into Yale's territory. It seemed that Yale had weakened of a sudden, and the crowd began to wonder if Princeton would never stop.

At last the Tigers were held on Yale's fifteen-yard line. Then it was seen that Bristol, Princeton's full-back, would try to kick a goal from the field.

It was a time of intense suspense. There were no cheers; a great hush had fallen on the field and on the spectators. Bristol had a reputation for his kicking.

He seemed cool as a cake of ice as he sauntered up to just the right spot.

Punk! away sailed the ball. There was a Princeton cheer, followed by a Yale yell of joy, for Bristol had missed a goal, and Van Tassle sent the pigskin back into the middle of the field.

"Oh—there—are—others!" roared the Yale admirers at Bristol.

Then there was some hot punting, which ended with Yale getting the ball by Bissel, Princeton's right half-back, kicking out of bounds.

Following this were some furious rushes. Men piled upon each other like wildcats. And then a halt was called, for as the men untangled themselves a lad in blue was seen stretched helpless and motionless on the ground.

Rattleton was near Merriwell.

"Who is it, Merry?" he called.

"I think it is Powell," replied Frank.

"Then you are likely to get a turn, old man," said Harry, with intense satisfaction. "The boys need bracing."

Rattleton had the utmost confidence in his friend. He believed Merriwell could give the entire team a brace.

It was in truth Powell, and he was so seriously injured that it was necessary to take him off the field.

Then, as had been expected, Merriwell was called on to fill the vacancy. Frank was in the game at last, and he had got there before the first half was over.

Hartwick ground his teeth with fury. "I hope he'll be killed!" muttered Evan, bitterly.

"Oh, he can't win the game alone! He is not a whole team!" laughed Ditson. "I don't fancy you will see that he makes any difference in the game."

"Oh, he is liable to do something to call attention to himself. It is a way he has. That's why I wanted to keep him out of the game."

"Well, it is too late to keep him out now."

"Yes; but he might be prevented from playing more than the first half. Such a thing is not impossible."

Ditson caught at this as a trout snaps at a fly.

"What do you mean? How can he be prevented from playing?"

"Oh, there are lots of ways to stop him. He does not drink, yet he swallowed something that made him seem drunk not so very long ago."

"You mean that he might be——"

"Shut up! Be careful how you speak. I've got the stuff to stop him. Will you try it?"

"Give it to me! I do not like him any more than you do, as you must know. I'll try if I get a chance."

Hartwick took something from his pocket and slipped it into Ditson's hand. Then there was a wild cheer, and the game was on once more.

Once again the yellow was fluttering wildly, for Princeton was forcing Yale back and the blue was compelled to play on the defensive. It was a stubborn fight, but the Tigers were working like fiends, urged on by the wild cheers of the crowd.

It was a marvelous sight, one to stir the blood to its quickest, one never to be forgotten. Men howled their delight and waved their hats and yellow flags; women and girls waved flags and handkerchiefs, and amid all that uproar there was a shrill note that told the voices were not all masculine.

The time was growing short, and Princeton was fighting for a touchdown before the end of the first half. It seemed that they were determined to succeed, for Yale could not hold them until her twenty-yard line was reached. Right there they were checked, and it was seen that Yale was fighting after their famous "last-ditch" style of playing.

Twenty-two young human panthers, supple, agile, fearless and determined, were struggling for the mastery. They were covered with dirt, their long hair

was disheveled, their faces were set, and their eyes gleamed with fine fury.

When Princeton found they could not batter their way through to a touchdown there came a sudden change of play. It became evident that Bristol was going to make another try to kick a goal from the field. The men assumed their positions, Princeton ready to attempt to stop Yale's rush line. Bristol balanced himself for the kick. He was steady as a mill, although he knew well enough that he would barely be able to lift the ball before Yale's rush line would break through and pile upon him like a lot of creatures furious for his blood. He might be crushed and seriously injured. It was almost certain he would be hurled into the dirt. Still he was cool and unwavering.

Merriwell was watching every movement, every look. He fancied he detected a sudden change of Princeton's plans, although Bristol was still balancing himself for the kick. He saw Bissel, Princeton's right half, fall back a yard or two. Then, just when Bristol seemed to kick, the ball was snapped back to Bissel and he shot around the end with it.

Yale had been fooled, and a great roar went up from the crowd.

Wait! There was one man in blue had not been deceived. Frank Merriwell was after Bissel, but be-

hind him. In another moment Bissel would go over the line and score a touchdown.

Then Merriwell hurled himself forward, his hands touched Bissel's hips, slipped to his knees, his ankles, and clung there like hooks.

Bissel went down, and a great mass of blue and yellow piled upon him. It was a masterly tackle, and Merriwell had won distinction so soon.

Had a goal been made? That was the question on every lip. Slowly the mass of human beings untangled, for the whistle had been heard and the first half was ended.

Then, at last, it was seen that Bissel had been stopped just beyond reach of the line, and the Yale cheer was heard, for Merriwell had kept Princeton from scoring.

Thus the first half ended, and neither side had made a point.

Merriwell was the hero of the moment. Everybody was asking his name. His comrades were congratulating him as they went back to quarters.

Hartwick had seen it all, and it is impossible to tell the bitterness which filled his heart. The very thing had happened that he had hoped to prevent by any means.

"He must not play the last half!" hissed Evan through his set teeth. "He must be fixed some way."

"He looked around for Ditson, but that worthy had vanished. Then Hartwick rushed away, bent on some desperate purpose.

As Merriwell went to quarters he happened to look up, and he saw amid the crowd that face that had thrilled him so at the beginning of the game.

Winnie Lee was there, and she had seen it all. She was radiant and she fluttered her handkerchief in his direction. His heart leaped with the thought that the signal might be intended for him after all.

In under the stand the men were rubbed down by experienced hands. Merriwell heard many voices congratulating him. He said nothing in return.

Somebody offered him a glass of water, which he took and lifted to his lips. He did not taste it before it was dashed from his hand, and the familiar voice of Rattleton cried:

"Excuse me! Don't wat any taker—I mean take any water from strangers! I'll see that what you get is all right."

Frank saw that a stranger with a full beard had offered him the drink. The man seemed to be highly indignant, and he used some very severe language in addressing Rattleton, who did not pay the slightest attention to him.

Harry gave Frank a drink, fairly beaming with delight.

"Oh, it was a dandy tackle—a peach!" he declared. "And he'd made a touchdown without a struggle if it hadn't been for you. If Yale wins, it will be because you saved the game right there. The Tigers could not be stopped if they had succeeded in that trick. Now the boys will have the courage to hold them."

A messenger came in with a note for Merriwell. This is what he read :

"DEAR MR. MERRIWELL: Win this game! If you do you will strike your worst enemy a blow. If you do, I may be able to clear up the mystery of a little affair that placed you under a cloud. Win it some way.
"E. D."

"E. D.," thought Frank as he tore up the note. "It must be from Eunice Darley. I wonder if she thinks it possible for me to win the game all by myself?"

The bearded stranger was lingering near. He was watching Merriwell steadily, but got no opportunity to approach the player again.

Quickly the time came for the playing to be resumed. Out upon the field trotted the players, and again the Tigers and the boys in blue faced each other, their positions reversed.

The bearded man came from the dressing-rooms and

spoke to Hartwick. Ditson hurried up. A few words passed between the three, and both Hartwick and Ditson seemed disgusted and furious.

The crowd was cheering once more and the great game was on again. The ball was soon punted to Yale's thirty-five-yard line, and there it clung.

It was noticeable that Yale was playing almost continually on the defensive. All through the game the ball had been the most of the time in her territory. The Tigers forced the play. Yale had a few weak points, and she did not seem to be in as good condition as Princeton, but she was desperate, and there was not a man of her eleven who did not seem to feel as if he were battling for his life and honor.

Finally Yale got the ball, and Curtis went around the end with it, getting into Princeton's territory before being downed. This caused the Yale rooters to open up in great style. The Yale cheer rang out and the blue flags waved.

For a few minutes Yale played master football. Then Halliday was hurt and forced to retire. A new man was put in his place. He was heavier than Ben, but not quite so snappy. However, his weight told in the rushes.

Yale tried to advance the ball in various ways and made some small gains, but there were no particularly

brilliant plays for some time. Kicking was tried, but Princeton had kickers, too, and Yale was forced to abandon this style of playing.

It was drawing toward the close of the second half, and still neither side had scored. The spectators were wrought up to an intense point of excitement, for every one seemed to feel that a crisis was approaching. At any moment a brilliant play might decide the game in favor of one side or the other.

Yale did not hold her advantage long. Princeton got the ball, and then, by a series of rushes and around-the-end plays, advanced it into Yale's territory again. The boys in blue retreated, fighting every inch of the ground, yet beaten back in a manner that caused their friends to lose heart.

"They are worked out," was the general opinion. "That last rush finished them and now Princeton will win with ease."

It seemed that this was right. Yale's line could not hold before the rushes of the furious Tigers. The center was lifeless, the ends were wavering, and it seemed that the whole team was going to pieces.

The friends of Yale became silent and anxious. Every fresh gain of the Tigers caused the flaunters of the yellow to whoop with delight. Back and still back Yale was forced. Thirty-five yards, thirty, twenty,

fifteen, ten—it seemed that one more grand rush would carry the ball over for Princeton.

The great crowd of spectators had arisen as one man. The excitement was tremendous, the uproar was deafening. More than twenty thousand human beings were frantic with fear or joy.

But once more Yale braces, and again the “last-ditch” style of playing enables the desperate boys in blue to hold the Tigers where they are. Not another inch can Princeton gain.

Then it seemed that at some preconcerted signal every Yale man on Manhattan Field took up the well-known college cheer. It made a volume of sound that was heard high above the general uproar, and it put new life and heart into the eleven desperate men who were ready to spill their hearts’ blood to hold the Tigers back. In one great roar it rolled over the field:

“Breka Co ax Co ax Co ax!

Breka Co ax Co ax Co ax!

O—up! O—up!

Parabolou!

Yale! Yale! Yale!

’Rah! ’rah! ’rah!

Yale!”

What was that? A sudden change—Yale had the ball! Holding it to his heart, a dust-covered lad in blue was off like a shot with it. That cheer seemed to

have turned the tide of battle. The Yale men were working as if the play had been arranged from start to finish long before. The quarter-back had given some signals, and every man was doing his part.

It was Frank Merriwell who had the ball and who had been sent straight across Princeton's center. As a last resort a strategic attempt had been made to send Merriwell suddenly through, just when an around-the-end play was expected.

Now the blue was waving everywhere, now the Yale crowd was roaring its new hope and joy.

"Merriwell! Merriwell! Merriwell!"

He was known—his name went up in a great shout.

Aided by Yale's masterly interference, Frank plunged straight through Princeton's center. The great form of Murphy loomed before him, but Thornton was on hand and Murphy was hurled aside. But now Frank was in advance, for the shock had staggered and stopped Thornton. Lawlor came charging at Merriwell, but Frank dodged him and darted on. Heiss rushed in from the other side and plunged for a tackle. He miscalculated Merriwell's speed, and Frank still dashed forward. Bailey was the only man who stood between Merriwell and a touchdown. Bailey seemed to know how much depended on him. He prepared to tackle low and sure.

There was a moment of suspense, a great roar, and the boy in blue continued down the field, while Bailey sprawled on the ground. Once more Frank had been able to deceive the tackler.

A band of furious Tigers were racing after Merriwell, bound to overtake and stop him. But Merriwell astonished everybody with his speed. Like a race horse he darted along. He had dashed straight through Princeton's line, and he ran the whole length of the field without being overtaken and tackled.

Over the line he went and dropped on the ball.

A touchdown!

Then there was cheering. It was the most wonderful run ever seen on Manhattan Field, and Merriwell was the hero of the day.

Van Tassle kicked a goal, and during the few minutes left for play Yale was able to hold her own, so the game ended six to nothing in her favor.

CHAPTER IX.

A SCORE TO SQUARE.

There was a great jubilee in New York that night, but Frank Merriwell took no part in it. Tired and sore, he rested, surrounded by admiring friends.

Professor Scotch, who did not believe in football, was on hand to fuss and scold and praise Frank. It was comical to hear the little man rail at the boy and then strut and crow over the manner in which Frank had won the game.

But what made Frank happiest was a handsome bouquet of flowers, to which was attached a card. On the card was daintily written these few words:

"From an admiring friend, who is sorry she permitted herself to be deceived by outward appearances."

"It must be from Winifred!" he thought. "I wonder if the other will keep her word and clear up matters?"

When Frank got back to New Haven he was the hero and idol of the college. It was considered an honor to obtain an introduction to him, and fellows who had never deigned to look at him before sought to be presented.

But all this laudation did not turn Frank's head. He remained true to his former friends, and they could not see the least change in his manner. He insisted that they were giving him altogether too much credit, and that any other fellow on the eleven might have done what he did had he found the opportunity.

It was not long before Frank received an invitation to call on Winifred Lee. As may be supposed, he lost no time in complying.

That night, when he returned to his room, he was in a state of mingled satisfaction and perplexity. Harry wondered and questioned him.

"What's the matter with you, Merry?" he asked. "Didn't the dear girl receive you just as you expected?"

"It isn't that. Her reception was more than I expected, but I am placed in a deuced awkward position."

"How is that?"

"Well, you know I want to prove beyond a doubt that I was drugged and not drunk at Mrs. Greydon's. Winnie—er, I mean Miss Lee, has acknowledged that she now knows it for a fact. She says she has received positive proof of it since the football match, but she claims that the one who drugged me had been told that it was all a harmless joke. That person, she says, must not be exposed. The truth cannot be told unless that person is exposed, and there I am."

"Well, that is a molly jess—I mean a jolly mess! What are you going to do about it?"

"That is what is bothering me. I think I know all the parties concerned."

"You do? Who are they?"

"Well, Hartwick was at the bottom of the whole affair and he got another person to drug me. The stuff was dropped into the water I drank——"

"And Eunice Darley did it!"

"Yes," said Frank, slowly, "I believe that is the truth. Miss Darley has left New Haven, begging not to be exposed. She has cleared me with Miss Lee, and I have given my promise not to bring Miss Darley into it. It seems that she knew Hartwick before he came here. He has some kind of a hold on her and he used her as a tool; but, as I said, she thought the matter a harmless joke. She came to hate Hartwick at last, and knowing he had bet heavily against Yale, she wished to see Yale win at Manhattan Field. She sent me the note I told you about. I made the touchdown and she tried to keep her promise to me. I do not know what power Hartwick had over her, but I think I have fathomed the case very well."

"Well, what are you going to do now?"

"I propose to square the score with Mr. Evan Hartwick!" cried Frank, with flashing eyes. "I can honor

a square and upright enemy, but not one who strikes me such a dastardly blow as did Hartwick! Let him look out for himself!"

Two days later an entirely different scene took place in Evan Hartwick's room, between that student and Roland Ditson.

Hartwick was angry and had worked himself to the point of saying he would fight Frank.

"But you are no match for Merriwell, you know," said Ditson, taking an ornamented cigarette case from a table near at hand and selecting a "straight cut."

Hartwick walked up and down the room, pausing before a full-length mirror, in which he surveyed his reflection.

"I don't know about that," he returned, sullenly.

"Oh, well, I am judging from the past," murmured Ditson, daintily rolling the cigarette and pulling a bit of tobacco from the ends. "No one has seemed able to get the best of that fellow."

"He is the luckiest dog alive!" snapped Hartwick, showing his teeth. "Everything seems to run his way. I knew he would do something out of the ordinary if he was not kept off the eleven, and I——"

"Failed in your efforts to keep him off."

"Yes," confessed Hartwick, "I did fail."

"And he made the touchdown that won the game."

"Of course. It was just his luck. If any other fellow on the team had been given the same opportunity, he would have accomplished the same thing. Yale's interference was magnificent, and Merriwell was given a clean path through Princeton's center. If he had failed he would have been a stick."

Something like a faint smile flickered over Ditson's sallow face, or was it the flare of the wax match he lighted at that moment? No matter. At any rate, he knew Merriwell had made a wonderful run through Princeton's center, even though Hartwick denied there was anything remarkable about it.

Ditson hated Merriwell quite as intensely as did Hartwick, but Ditson had learned to fear Merriwell as well as to hate him. Hartwick was bolder. Not that he was above underhand work, as the past had shown, but he would fight openly if forced to do so.

"I did my best to get the stuff you gave me into him between halves," said Roland, who had inhaled a whiff from the cigarette and allowed it to escape as he talked. "I got an outsider to offer him water in which I had dropped the powder."

"But he didn't drink it."

"No. He would if it had not been for Rattleton. Rattleton saved him that time."

"Hang Rattleton! He's a fool! Seems to think

there's no one else in the world but Merriwell. He is sickening!"

"Yes, Rattleton sticks by Merriwell. But what's this I hear about Merriwell being drugged at Mrs. Greydon's by some person who has confessed the whole thing?"

Hartwick pressed his lips together, and his face paled a bit.

"That's rot!" he exclaimed.

"Well, I don't know. Of course, you didn't do the job?"

"I had no opportunity."

"Certainly not. It is hinted that the person who did it has said some other person was responsible. The one who did it claims to have thought it was a joke."

Hartwick seemed startled.

"When did you hear all this?"

"To-day."

"Who said it?"

"Oh, some of the 'Umpty-eighters were talking it over. They say that is why Merriwell is making things so hot for you."

"For me? Then he believes I was concerned in the matter? Why doesn't he come out and say so boldly? I know. He can't prove it! He would if he could prove it, and so he is giving me all this

trouble. He has worked into the good graces of Winnie Lee, so she thinks he is a fine chap, and she will not have anything more to do with me. Hang him!"

Hartwick slammed a chair about, as if he longed to break something.

"This Winnie Lee business is what cuts you the deepest," said Ditson, his face hidden for a moment behind a cloud of smoke, as if he sought concealment.

"You were hard hit by that girl."

"Oh, I don't know," returned Hartwick, with an effort at carelessness. "She is good people. Her father's got the dust, and that's to be considered, you know."

"Well, you and Merriwell became enemies when he began to show Miss Lee attentions. Isn't that right?"

"Oh, I didn't care about having the fellow chasing after her," acknowledged Hartwick. "I always hated him, but I don't suppose I'd bothered myself about him if he had kept away from Winnie."

"That's the way I thought the matter stood," nodded Ditson. "He got the inside track there."

"Not till after the football game. That seemed to settle everything in his favor. I don't know yet just how it came around, but Winnie turned me down right away after that."

"Perhaps she found out——"

Ditson paused.

"What?"

"Oh, the truth about that little affair at Mrs. Greydon's. Perhaps she learned that you were the one who put up the job to drug Merriwell."

Hartwick came over and stood looking down at Ditson, frowning blackly, while there was an ugly light in his eyes.

"Look here, Ditson," he said, gratingly, "don't you get too forward! I never have confessed that I had anything to do with that matter—not even to you."

Ditson did not seem in the least disturbed. He looked up at Evan in a manner that was rather insolent, and said:

"I know you have not confessed it, but that doesn't make any difference. You can't fool any one. Why, don't I know that you wished to drug Merriwell at the football game? What is the difference between that and Mrs. Greydon's? I know more than you told me. Where is Eunice Darley?"

Evan started again and bit his lip.

"I don't know," he said, shortly, turning away.

"I say, Hartwick," drawled Roland, stretching his legs into a comfortable position, "what kind of a grip did you have on Eunice Darley that you were able to get her to do that little piece of work for you?"

Hartwick wheeled, crouching a bit, his hands clinched. For one instant it seemed that he would spring at his companion, but Ditson showed no alarm, calmly blowing a bit of blue smoke toward the decorated ceiling.

Evan slowly straightened up, unclasped his hands and rested them on his hips, still surveying Ditson.

"Well, you seem to have taken a most remarkable interest in my affairs all at once," he said, sneeringly.

"That's natural," was the retort. "We have mutual interests, for we both hate Merriwell. I know you had some kind of a hold on the Darley girl. At first I thought she was stuck on you and trying to cut Winnie Lee out, although they were friends. After a time, I came to see that she seemed to be helping you along with Miss Lee. Then I decided that you had some kind of a grip on her, and you were compelling her to aid you. Where is she now?"

"Don't know. Gone home, I suppose."

"You knew her before she came here to New Haven to visit?"

"Perhaps."

"Of course you did. She introduced you to Winnie Lee. That was the way you became acquainted with Miss Lee."

"Well, hang me!" cried Hartwick. "You have

posted yourself pretty well on my affairs! How much more do you know?"

"Oh, I know lots of things that I do not mention," smiled Ditson, insinuatingly. "It is not easy to lose me, Hartwick."

"You must be as prying as any old woman!"

"You acknowledge that what I have told you is true?"

"Oh, what's the use? You think you know, and that is enough. But, it is rather dangerous nosing into other folks' private affairs. You had better be careful."

Ditson waved his hand carelessly.

"Don't waste your breath warning me. Two fellows with a common cause like ours should understand each other far better than we do. You hate Merriwell, and I'd like to see you get the best of him. I'm ready to help you, but I have no relish for fighting that fellow. He is a scrapper from away back."

"Oh, I do not propose to fight him with my fists."

"How, then?"

"There are other ways. I know how to match him, and when we meet I will mark him for life! I have things fixed for it. I will spoil his pretty face!"

"I don't think I understand you. How can you do that unless you fight him with your fists?"

"Oh, there are ways. Wait till things come around right. I will catch him in the gym some day, and then, if too many are not looking on, I'll get in my work."

"In the gym, eh?"

"Yes."

"He is likely to be there this afternoon. What do you say if we go down?"

Hartwick hesitated a moment, and then came the thought that Ditson might fancy he feared to meet Merriwell if he declined to go.

"Come on," he said.

Ditson flung aside the stump of his cigarette, and then both lads took their hats and left the room together.

CHAPTER X.

HARTWICK FORCES MERRIWELL.

Every afternoon Frank put in a certain amount of work at the gymnasium, the days of athletic exercise in the open air being over till spring should come again.

Frank was determined to keep himself in the finest possible condition, for it was said that he would be the regular pitcher on the ball team during the coming season, as Heffner's arm had never come back to its proper form after the serious work of the season past.

Among the exercises which Frank most admired and enjoyed was fencing, and he used to have a bout with Rattleton almost every afternoon. Sometimes, when Rattleton was not on hand, Diamond would give him a go.

Diamond had been very proud of his skill as a fencer when he first came to Yale. Being a Virginian and having the warm blood of the South flowing in his veins, he had thoroughly believed in the code duello.

It happened that Diamond had not admired Frank at the outset. A difference had arisen between them over some trifling matter, and in all seriousness the Virginian had challenged Frank to a duel. As Frank

was the challenged party, it was his privilege to name the weapons, and he named—fists.

This did not satisfy Diamond at all, as he believed no one but ruffians and prize fighters fought with their fists; but he could not get out of it very well, and he had stood up before Frank as long as possible, taking his medicine in a manner that won the admiration of the spectators, and made Frank feel thoroughly sorry that it was necessary to end the affair by knocking him out, as he would not give up.

Then Diamond was fiercer than ever to force Merriwell into a sword duel, and he had finally succeeded; but, to his untold amazement, he found Merry more than his match, and he was twice disarmed. An interruption stopped the duel, and later events made the two lads very good friends.

It did not take Diamond long to accustom himself to the ways of the North, and he lost little time in taking lessons in boxing so that he could fight with his fists if occasion arose.

Merriwell and Diamond finally came to engage in friendly fencing bouts, as Diamond was the nearest Merriwell's match of any man known in the college as a practical fencer.

Now Hartwick had taken fencing lessons, and as he was one of those fellows who believe no one can do any-

thing better than they, he had a conviction that it would not be such a difficult thing to get the best of Frank Merriwell in a bout. He had not seen much of Frank's fencing, but what he had seen had not seemed very remarkable.

Hartwick went to work with the foils to get himself in condition, and all the while he had an object in view further than that of simply meeting Merriwell in a set-to that might be regarded by a casual observer as friendly.

As Hartwick and Ditson entered the gymnasium on the afternoon when our story opens they looked around sharply. The place was well filled with young men who were at work in a serious manner at the different exercises. Some were on the bars, some were casting the shot, some were pulling away at the rowing machines, and others were engaged in the hundred of things that may be done with the apparatus in the Yale gym.

A little exclamation of satisfaction came from Hartwick.

"He is here!"

"I see," nodded Ditson.

"And he is doing the very thing I want to see him at."

"He is fencing with Diamond."

"Yes. Come on—we will go over and watch them."

Ditson and Hartwick made no secret of their apparent friendship. Hartwick had taken Ditson up, although Roll was in the class below him and had been caught in tricks which had caused those who had seemed his friends to shun him.

They strolled over toward the spot where, all by themselves, Merriwell and Diamond were fencing in a light, delicate and graceful manner.

Diamond was not quite so heavy as Merriwell, but he was splendidly proportioned, and he had a fine, serious face which had much of character in it.

Hartwick and Ditson stopped at a little distance from the fencers and watched them at work. As either was touched by his opponent, Merriwell or Diamond called out the point.

It was a very pretty exhibition, and it was plain that Merriwell was not greatly the superior of the Southerner, although slightly so.

There was no laughing. They went at it with a gravity that made it seem like an actual duel, and yet they were as considerate and gentlemanly as possible. Feint, thrust, parry, riposte followed in swift succession, the two lads swinging about and about, gliding forward, gliding backward, balancing themselves on

their toes, and seeming to hold their foils as lightly and daintily as a lady holds a fork.

It was clever work, as Ditson immediately acknowledged to himself; but there was a sneer on Hartwick's face, and he laughed derisively as Diamond made a riposte and counted on Merriwell.

That laugh attracted Frank's attention, and a quick flash of his eyes showed him for the first time that his two enemies were watching the contest.

Then the bout went on as before, Merriwell not giving the spectators another glance.

At intervals Hartwick laughed. When he could find no real occasion to laugh at Merriwell's work, he laughed anyway.

The hot blood surged upward into Diamond's cheeks and a scowl settled on his forehead. It was plain that he was greatly annoyed, even though Frank Merriwell remained as calm and cool as possible.

Finally Hartwick sneeringly observed:

"Well, I have seen easy marks, but I really think I have been watching the easiest thing on earth. And it really thinks it can fence!"

With this he turned his back on the two lads.

Quick as a flash Diamond broke away and made a spring for Hartwick, removing his mask.

"Sir!" he cried, "I do not know to whom you refer,

but your laughter and your manner has been an insult to both of us!"

Hartwick turned slowly about, surveyed Diamond a moment, and then said with the utmost deliberation:

"I assure you that I did not see you at all, my good fellow. When I spoke I referred to quite another person."

"He meant me, Jack," said Merriwell, coming up; "but I don't mind anything an individual of his character may say. It is not worth noticing."

That was enough to drive away all of Hartwick's pretended coolness. He showed his anger in a moment, and he cried:

"I'd like to know what you mean by an individual of my character! Make yourself understood, sir."

"Come, Jack," said Frank, "let's finish. Don't mind them."

"But this man has insinuated that one or both of us does not know how to fence. I want him to name the one. If he means me——"

"I tell you I did not notice you at all," cried Hartwick. "I was watching the bungling work of this individual with whom you were engaged. If I could not fence better than he does I would not touch a foil."

Diamond snapped his fingers.

"If you were to meet him in a real duel, he would

puncture your heart before you could make two thrusts," declared the Southerner.

"Pouf!" sneered Hartwick. "He has made you think he is something wonderful. I would toy with him."

Jack fell back and surveyed Hartwick wonderingly, as if doubting the fellow's sanity. Ditson took his cue and broke in:

"That is right, Hartwick. Merriwell would be a plaything for you."

"Look here, sir!" cried Diamond, hotly, "I am no match for Frank Merriwell, but I think I can settle you very quickly! That will stop all dispute. If you will be good enough to get into a suit and mask, I will give you a go."

Hartwick shook his head.

"Oh, no," he said. "I have no desire to have it out with you. There would not be the least satisfaction in that. But there are others."

As he finished he looked at Merriwell significantly, insolently. It was a direct and open challenge.

Diamond expected to see Merriwell accept in a twinkling, and he was astonished when Frank calmly said:

"I have no fancy for meeting you in this manner, but there are other ways and other places."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Hartwick, derisively. "That

shows he is afraid of me! It shows that all his pretended skill is mere bluff. He knows he is no match for me, and he does not dare meet me."

Still Merriwell held his temper with an iron hand.

"If you are in earnest about meeting me," he said, icily, "you shall have an opportunity, but not here and now."

"That is a stand-off! You do not dare meet me! I know what you want. You think to catch me off my guard some time and knock me out with your fists. You are a bruiser and a ruffian, but I could soon show that you do not know the rudiments of fencing."

That was too much for Merriwell to take. He walked over and looked Hartwick straight in the eye.

"It is plain that you are trying to force me into a corner," he said, his voice still steady. "Well, sir, I have no fancy for a contest with the foils with you. I should relish something more serious. But as you have placed me in a position where it is not easy to refuse, I will give you all you desire."

"Then you will meet me?"

"Yes. Get ready."

"Good! You will find me ready very shortly. Do not run away. That is all I ask of you."

Hartwick hurried away to a dressing-room, followed closely by Ditson, who lost little time in saying:

"Man, are you daft! Merriwell can defeat any man at Yale with the foils. He is sure to do you up."

"Wait and watch," advised Hartwick. "You may see something you are not expecting, and you must stand by me, no matter what happens."

It did not take Hartwick long to prepare for the bout. He came from the dressing-room, foil in hand, Ditson following at his heels, but looking rather pale and alarmed.

Ditson did not understand what Hartwick meant by saying something unexpected might happen, and he could not get Evan to say more than that.

Hartwick again urged Ditson to be sure to stand by him, no matter what happened, and that did not serve to soothe Roland's agitated nerves.

"What do you mean? What are you going to do?" fluttered Ditson in an unsteady whisper, grasping Evan's arm with fingers that were shaking. "Now don't do anything that will get us into further trouble! I have had trouble enough with Frank Merriwell."

One could not have believed Ditson was the same fellow who had appeared so cool and insolent in Hartwick's room a short time before. All his coolness had vanished, and it was plain to his companion that he really stood in terror of Merriwell.

"I am going to fix him!" hissed Evan. "I'll do it in a moment!"

"Fix him? How? Do you mean that you will——"

"Mark him for life—that is all. Hush! Here we are."

Merriwell and Diamond were chatting together, paying very little attention to the approach of the other lads. Merriwell seemed light and easy in his manner, smiling pleasantly and exhibiting not the least signs of a ruffled temper.

On the other hand, it was plain that Diamond had been aroused by Hartwick's insolence, for his every expression showed the anger he was endeavoring to control.

"Well, here I am."

It took but a few moments to make all arrangements for the little affair. Somehow there seemed to be the air of a serious duel about it, Diamond and Ditson standing for seconds.

The others in the gymnasium had not been attracted by anything that was passing in that corner, and they were going steadily about their various engagements.

Diamond made a few remarks about certain rules; but Hartwick did not object to anything, seeming quite willing to let the others arrange the matter to suit themselves.

Very soon Merriwell and Hartwick faced each other, and Diamond gave the word:

"On guard!"

The two lads instantly assumed the proper position, with right sides and profiles toward each other, their foils poised so the buttons were about four inches from the floor. Then the foil was lifted and extended, slowly dropped again, swung across the body for the fingers of the left hand to lightly touch the blade, in which manner it was carried above the head, held horizontally a second, following which the left arm fell back in a slightly curved position, and the right arm dropped till the foil was on a line with the adversary's eye. Each one bent the legs by separating them at the knees, without moving the feet, shifted the weight of their bodies to the left leg, and then advanced the right foot a short distance.

They were on guard.

"Fence!"

Both advanced, the foils crossed, and the contest began.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FENCING BOUT.

For some moments the work was careful and deliberate, showing that they were "feeling of each other." Gradually the action became swifter as they went into the affair in earnest.

Hartwick was a fairly good fencer, but he was no match for Merriwell, although this did not become evident for some time, as Merriwell remained almost wholly on the defensive.

Hartwick began to force the battle. Once or twice he succeeded in counting prettily on Merriwell; but Frank was deft in riposte, and he returned each count.

Then Merriwell began to leave what seemed to be awkward openings, but each time Hartwick would attempt to get in by them, a simple turn of the wrist, often a mere movement of the fingers without an apparent move of the hand, was enough to parry the thrust.

This was very exasperating for Hartwick, who swiftly varied his manner of attack, only to find each different assault met and defeated with the same deftness that told how expert Merriwell really was.

"Hang him!" cried Evan, mentally, "how does he do it? Is he a wizard? Sometimes he doesn't seem to move his hand at all, but his confounded foil moves just the same!"

Ditson had observed all this, and he saw that Hartwick was outmatched and that Merriwell was simply standing on the defensive and toying with his foe.

"I told him!" thought Roland. "I knew how it would be! That fellow Merriwell is a terror! Hartwick is getting hot under the collar and perspiring, while Merriwell remains as cool as ice. And it is plain Hartwick is no slouch."

Something like a faint smile came to the face of Jack Diamond, and he actually pitied Hartwick for a moment, thinking how humiliating it must be to find he was a plaything in Merriwell's hands, after all.

Hartwick thrust at Merriwell's right breast, but Merriwell's foil caught the other blade, forced it down to the right in a very small circle, then up over to the left, and back again to the same position he had held before making the movement, having caught and forced Hartwick's foil out of line in a twinkling.

Hartwick repeated the thrust like a flash. This time Merriwell moved his hand slightly to the right and turned the thrust without trying the counter.

A grated exclamation came through Hartwick's teeth.

"You are very slick!" he muttered, his eyes glaring; "but there are others, as you will soon discover!"

Merriwell smiled in the most exasperating manner

"I really thought you might be able to fence, Hartwick," he said, "but you'll never succeed till you are able to control your temper. If you were engaged in an actual duel and lost your head, you would be pretty sure to lose your life."

Frank's manner caused Hartwick to turn pale with fury, while his eyes seemed to start from their sockets. His lips were parted just enough to slightly expose his clinched teeth.

"You're stuck on yourself!" he said, hoarsely. "You think you are something, but you'll find out you are mistaken!"

To this Frank made no reply.

"Some time," panted Hartwick—"some time we may meet in a real duel! I have a score to square with you!"

"And I have one to square with you!" returned Frank, coldly. "You struck me a cowardly blow that came near bringing disgrace and ruin upon me. The time will come when I will even things up!"

"Bah!" retorted Hartwick. "Until you tried to

make trouble for me, I would not have turned my hand over had I been able to perpetrate any injury that I wished upon you by so doing. You were beneath my notice."

"Really! How about your threats when you said I had insulted two young ladies? You seemed ready to eat me then."

"I am ever ready to protect a lady from the insults of a ruffian."

"That sounds very fine, but a certain young man knocked you down on a street corner one night for insulting a lady."

"Yes," hissed Hartwick, "and the meddling fool who struck the blow got a crack on the head with his own cane—a crack that nearly broke his skull."

"Ha!" cried Merriwell, with satisfaction, "this is very good! I see you were the fellow who insulted the girl. Of that I was not certain before, but you have betrayed yourself by your knowledge of the affair."

Hartwick bit his tongue madly, seeing that he had been tricked into saying something about what he had better remained silent. Was this fellow Merriwell to get the best of him in all ways?

"You know it now," he said, seeing that he could not retreat, "and you know that it was I who cracked

you on the head with your cane. I thought I had broken your skull, but it seems that it was too thick to be fractured thus easily."

"This adds a little something to the score against you, Hartwick," came from Frank. "Now I know about where I stand with you. You failed in your attempt to disgrace me, and then you tried to crack my skull. There is a man who says he was hired to drug me at the football game in New York. I presume I may as well count that against you, too?"

Ditson started and turned pale, while Hartwick betrayed a slight amount of emotion.

It seemed that everything was coming out. The whole black truth would be known very soon unless something was done.

Ditson had taken a hand in the attempt to drug Merriwell in New York, and he stood in the utmost terror of exposure, for he knew that he had remained at Yale because Frank was lenient with him in regard to other offenses which would have caused his expulsion had they been publicly known.

If Merriwell should learn that Ditson had been concerned in the effort to drug him at Manhattan Field, would he not tell everything? That was what Ditson feared.

"You may count anything you like!" snarled Hart-

wick. "I suppose you will try to do me up by blowing all this?"

"I shall settle my own score, and settle it with interest," said Frank, grimly. "I do not need the assistance of any other person."

Then, with great rapidity, he counted on Hartwick thrust after thrust. It seemed that Evan was not able to stop anything. He tried, but whenever he stopped one form of thrust, Merriwell seemed instantly to change it into another form that was effective.

Hartwick became beside himself with fury, for he saw that he was a mere plaything in the hands of the lad he hated. A seething furnace of fury glowed and flamed in his heart, seeming to send an almost unearthly glare from his eyes.

Frank forced the contest, driving the other back.

Suddenly, with a cry of unspeakable rage, Hartwick tore the button from the point of his foil and lunged straight and hard at Frank's face!

"Look out!"

The cry came from Diamond's lips as he started forward.

But there was no need to warn Merriwell. He had been on his guard for any kind of a move that Hartwick might make.

There was a clash, a flash, a twisting movement, and

Hartwick's foil was torn from his hand and fell to the floor.

He had been disarmed in a twinkling and with ease.

"Give it to him!" cried Diamond, hotly. "Give it to the coward!"

He seemed eager to hit Evan himself, but Merriwell extended his foil and pressed it across the breast of his friend, holding Diamond back.

"Easy, old man!" he warned, never taking his eyes for a moment from his foe. "This is my affair, remember."

"That's all right!" flashed from the hot-blooded Virginian. "I know it is your affair. Thump him!"

"Not here! You should know that it might mean expulsion for us both if we engaged in a fight."

"There won't be a fight," declared Jack. "You'd knock him stiff with one blow. I don't see how you can keep from hitting him!"

"Let him try it—let him try it!" panted Hartwick, who was mad with rage and desperation. "Come on!"

His hand went around to his hip in a significant manner, which seemed to distinctly say that he was reaching for some sort of a weapon.

"Now don't think for a moment that that little movement keeps me from soaking you," said Frank. "If I had thought of hitting you I should not have

given you time to get it out; but I am not going to strike you—here. There is another time coming, Hartwick, and it will be a serious day of reckoning for you.”

“Hang me if I can understand how you hold yourself in check under such circumstances!” cried Diamond. “I’d kill a fellow who did anything of the sort to me!”

“You would do something that would put yourself to all appearances in the wrong with him. You would not consider the time and place. Don’t think Mr. Evan Hartwick will not have to settle for this cowardly trick. I am not going to let him off.”

“Be careful!” snarled Hartwick. “You may say too much! I can’t stand everything from you!”

Others in the gymnasium saw something unusual was taking place, and they began to gather about the boys. Seeing this, Hartwick suddenly picked up his foil and made for his dressing-room, followed by Roland Ditson, who was white and shivering.

Diamond would have told everything that had happened to all who asked, but Merriwell silenced him.

“Come,” said Frank to Jack, “we will dress.”

Then he assured the lads gathered about that it was a matter of no consequence, and hurried Diamond away.

In the dressing-room Diamond said:

"Merriwell, I cannot understand you at all. You seem utterly fearless, but I almost believe you are made of ice. I should have been hot for the heart's blood of a man who tried such a dastardly game on me."

"All my life I have studied to control myself and never let anger get the best of my judgment," said Frank. "Sometimes it is a difficult thing to do, but I succeed fairly well. It is certain that I dislike this fellow Hartwick as thoroughly as you do. I know that I should have leaped on him and strangled him had I given way to my feelings. I understood what such a thing would mean. Hartwick had his man Ditson with him, and they would have sworn that the button came off the foil by accident, and——"

"I was there! I saw it all and I knew better!"

"Of course you did, but it would have been our word against their word. If they stuck to their story we could not prove that what we said was true, but they could have proved that I assaulted Hartwick in the gymnasium. You see where that would have placed me."

"Well, I don't see how you had time to think of all that and hold yourself in check as you did."

"It flashed through my brain in an instant. That may have been Hartwick's little game. Perhaps some

other fellow besides Ditson—some friend of Hartwick's—was watching, and would have come forward to swear that I had assaulted Hartwick without provocation. That would not have counted for much had it been out in the town, but here in the gym it might have been serious business for me."

"I see that you are right," said Jack, slowly; "but think of it—the cur tore off the button and struck at your face! The point of the foil would have gone through your mask had it reached, and you would have been marked for life. If it had struck one of your eyes you would have been blinded or killed."

"That is true."

"And what I would like to know is how he was able to tear the button off as he did."

Frank started.

"I should like to know that, too! He should not have been able to remove it in that way with his fingers."

"Of course not."

"The foil was fixed for that very thing in advance."

"It must have been."

"And that is why Hartwick was so eager to fence with me."

"Certainly."

"That is right! He must have planned this thing

out and prepared for it beforehand. He did not do it on the spur of the moment."

"Now you have hit the truth."

Frank was hastening to get into his clothes.

"If we had captured that foil we could have told if it had been tampered with," he said. "We should have secured it."

"We may be able to secure it now," suggested Jack. "We will hurry up and nail Hartwick before he leaves the gym."

They hastened to get into their clothes, and then they lost no time in making for the little room where Hartwick was dressing. As they did so they saw Ditson hurrying from the building, but neither of them knew he was carrying something under his coat.

Frank pushed open the door of Hartwick's dressing-room, which he had not fastened after Ditson's departure, and entered boldly.

Hartwick was on his feet in a moment, flushed with anger.

"What business have you in here till I have finished dressing?" he cried, scowling blackly. "Get out!"

"We have business here," said Frank, grimly, "and we will get out when we have finished it."

Diamond came in and closed the door, fastening it behind him.

"Oh, I think I see your little game!" cried Hartwick. "You have waited till you could get me penned like this, and you both mean to jump on me. That is quite brave!"

"We have come here to demand that foil," said Frank. "Produce it!"

Hartwick laughed and snapped his fingers in Frank's face.

"Find it!" he cried.

Diamond was looking around for the article they desired, but could see nothing of it.

"You had better give it up," declared Frank.

"Oh, had I?"

"You had. If it has not been tampered with, there will be some excuse for your dastardly act—the excuse of uncontrollable anger."

"I seek no excuses for anything. The button came off accidentally. I will swear to that, and you cannot prove to the contrary."

There was a sneer on Hartwick's face. He knew that he could not make them believe it had been an accident, but he felt sure they could not prove it was anything else.

"Did the foil belong to the gymnasium?" asked Diamond.

"Find out!" said Hartwick.

"Make him give it up, Merriwell!" grated Jack. "I would!"

"You think you would," said Evan. "You are a fine fellow—a peach! I admire you—nit! You are one of the sort of fellows who turn around and lick the hand that beats them. Merriwell was your enemy to begin with, and he hammered the stuffing out of you when he knew you were able to stand up and fight him fairly with your fists. Now you recognize him as your master."

"I was in the wrong. I forced Mr. Merriwell to fight."

"Bah! Talk about your Southern blood! Southerners are all curs!"

Crack! Quick as a flash Diamond struck Hartwick, knocking him back against the wall. He would have followed up the attack, but Frank caught hold of him.

"Help!" shouted Hartwick. "Help! help!"

"Steady, Jack—steady!" commanded Merriwell. "You are putting us in a bad position. Hold on now."

"Oh, let me hit him again!" came through the set teeth of the Virginian. "He insulted me! He called all Southerners curs! Let me hit him just once more!"

It was not easy for Merriwell to hold the hot-blooded lad in check, but he did so, talking swiftly and earnestly to quiet Jack.

"Help!" shouted Hartwick again.

"It's done now, anyway, and you may as well let me do it good," said Jack. "He is going to call witnesses and swear we have assaulted him here. He can prove it, for I have left the mark of my knuckles on his cheek."

"He will swear to nothing of the sort."

"Won't I?" grated Hartwick. "Wait and see about that!"

Then he shouted again.

There was the sound of feet outside and a heavy knocking on the door.

"Let us in! What is the matter in there?"

Merriwell had whirled on Hartwick just as he was about to cry out that he was being assaulted. Frank caught hold of him, held him in an iron grip, looked straight into his eyes, and swiftly said in a very low voice:

"If you say we assaulted you I will expose the whole deal of your drugging business at Mrs. Greydon's, and I can prove everything I shall claim. It will mean expulsion for you as sure as fate."

That was all he said. He released Hartwick, turned about deliberately, and unfastened the door.

"Walk in, gentlemen," he coolly said. "What do you want, anyway?"

CHAPTER XII.

DITSON "TOUCHES" HARTWICK.

There were a number of persons at the door, and they looked in curiously. One of them said:

"We thought we heard some one calling for help in here."

"You must have been mistaken," smiled Frank, easily. "I did not call for help, nor did Mr. Diamond. Eh, Jack?"

"Certainly I did not," said Jack.

"And Mr. Hartwick—did you call for help, Mr. Hartwick?" asked Frank, his eyes meeting Evan's full and fair for a moment.

"No," said Hartwick, with an effort, "I did not call."

Merriwell turned to those at the door with a laugh, observing:

"You see you were mistaken, gentlemen. There is no occasion why any of us should call."

Some turned away at once, while others lingered a moment, still fancying things were not so pacific in the little dressing-room as they seemed.

Some of them knew there was trouble between Mer-

riwell and Hartwick, and they wondered that the two should be together in the dressing-room.

Frank closed the door again. The moment he did so Hartwick hoarsely said:

"What is it now? Are you not ready to quit bullying me? Do you mean to jump on me again? Don't you try it! I have stood too much already, and this time I will do damage!"

His hand went around to his hip in that threatening manner.

"What a bluff!" laughed Frank. "Why, if you had a revolver and dared to use it you would not have waited so long. I'll go you something that you have not got a revolver in your pocket."

"You know too much! You'll drop dead with congestion of the brain some day! You had better be careful!"

"You will be lucky if you are not hanged some day," flashed Diamond.

"That's all right! I am not forgetting you, Mr. John Diamond, of Virginia! I have Merriwell to settle with first, and then comes your turn!"

"I wish you might feel like making it my turn first."

"Don't worry; I will get at you all right enough. You struck me, and I'll never forget it."

"I don't want you to forget it. I want you to re-

member that a Southerner promptly resented an insult to himself and his section of the country. There was a time when I fancied that most Northerners were like you, but I have found out the difference. I have found there are white men and true men in the North. But there are some scoundrels—like yourself."

"Oh, keep it up—rub it in!" panted Hartwick. "I will make a record of all these things!"

"Do so. Nothing can give me greater satisfaction. If I have an enemy, I want to know it. If I think a man is a scoundrel, I am quite willing that he should know my opinion of him. I wish to say that you have escaped mighty easy for the time, considering what you did to-day. You should thank fortune, but you should not fancy the matter ends here."

"I do not propose to let it end here. I am going to push it myself, and you'll both be sorry you ever went up against Evan Hartwick!"

Frank's hand fell on Jack's shoulder.

"Drop it for the present," he said. "What we want is that foil."

"You will not get it," declared Hartwick.

"Will not?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because it is not here."

"Ha!" cried Frank. "Ditson—I did not think of him! He was leaving the gym as we came in here."

"And he had the foil," said Diamond.

"Of course. Hartwick had him smuggle it out. Is that not the truth, Hartwick?"

Evan simply smiled scornfully.

"It is true!" exclaimed Frank. "I can see it in his face! He has got the best of us in this, but never mind. The mere fact that he lost no time in smuggling the foil out of the building is proof enough that there was crookedness about it."

"True," nodded Jack. "Of course it was a crooked piece of business, and it was prepared for in advance."

Hartwick had finished dressing. He took out a cigarette and lighted it, leaning carelessly against the wall.

"Go ahead!" he sneered. "Take your time. I suppose it is necessary for me to remain here till you get ready to leave."

"Come," said Frank as he flung open the door.

Merriwell and Diamond went out together. Hartwick flung aside the cigarette and followed them a moment later.

Evan left the gymnasium and hurried to his room. As he had anticipated, he found Ditson there, lounging on a couch and puffing away at a cigarette.

In a furious mood, Hartwick burst into the room. He lost no time in bathing his bruised cheek in cold water and witch hazel, and his language was anything but mild and pleasant as he did so.

"What's the matter, old boy?" lazily asked Ditson after a few moments.

With a towel in one hand and a bottle of witch hazel in the other, Hartwick came tearing out into the room where Ditson was reclining.

"Look!" he cried, pointing to his cheek. "Do you see that?"

"Whew!" whistled Roll, showing sudden interest. "What is that?"

"What is it? Oh, what does it look like?"

"It looks as if you had been slugged."

"Well, that is right."

"What? You don't mean it?"

"Don't I? Oh, no! What do you think is the matter with me? This is no joke, man! I was hit, I tell you!"

"Who did it?"

"Diamond."

"What?"

"After you left, Merriwell and Diamond came into the room where I was dressing. They walked right in,

for I had carelessly forgotten to fasten the door when you went out."

Ditson sat up. He was interested at last.

"What were they there for?"

"Looking after that foil."

"Then I did not get away with it any too soon."

"Not an instant. They could not find it, of course. I had some words with them, and I was not exactly complimentary to Diamond. He got hot and hit me."

"And you didn't hit back?"

"What do you take me for? The door was fastened, and I was alone with those two fellows. They could have hammered the life out of me. No, I did not hit back."

"Well, I must observe that this has been a rather warm afternoon," said Roll. "You had a frightful nerve to attempt that trick with Merriwell, and it was dead lucky that I broke the foil in two pieces and hustled out with it under my coat. That would be a mighty bad piece of evidence against you, old boy."

"I suppose you are right. What did you do with it?"

"Oh, I took care of it. You need not worry about that, for it is quite safe."

"Why didn't you bring it here?"

"Here? What if your enemies should find a way to search these rooms? This was no place to bring it."

"Search these rooms! How could they do that? No, that would not be attempted. You should have brought it here, and I would have disposed of it."

"If Merriwell took a fancy to search these rooms, he would find a way to do it. You do not know that fellow yet."

"I will take chances on it. I want you to get that foil and bring it here. I shall not feel safe till it is in my possession, and then I will place it where no one can ever bring it as proof against me."

"I don't blame you," smiled Ditson in a crafty manner. "I will bring it over, but perhaps I had better not try it now. Merriwell and Rattleton might see me, and——"

"No, I would not try it now," hastily agreed Hartwick. "You must bring it here in the night, when there is no danger that you will be seen and suspected. But are you sure that you have placed it where they will not find it?"

"Yes, I am sure of that. Don't let it worry you."

Hartwick went back to the running water, where he resumed bathing his cheek. His heart was full of bitterness, for everything had gone against him that afternoon. He cursed when he thought how Merriwell had forced him to say he had not called for help in the

dressing-room. He felt that he had quailed before Frank's threat.

"And I do not believe he can prove anything," thought Hartwick. "Eunice Darley is gone, and she is the only one who could prove that I drugged him. I did not drug him! She did it! She would not dare tell that! I was a fool! I let Merriwell bluff me! I should have told how I was attacked in the dressing-room by Merriwell and Diamond."

The thought that he had weakened before Frank was not one to make him more agreeable, and he slammed things about madly when he came out where Ditson was still reclining and serenely smoking.

"You are as cool as anything now," he snarled, "but I noticed that you did not have much nerve at the gym."

"Oh, well, it's all over now, and I have the foil, you know," smiled Roll. "By the way, old fel, I'm broke just now. Can you let me have fifty?"

Hartwick looked sharply at Ditson. He was tempted to refuse, but he suddenly realized that it might not be well for him to do so, and so he pulled out his pocketbook.

"I'll let you have twenty-five," he said, and counted out the money, which Ditson accepted, with a look of satisfaction.

CHAPTER XIII.

YOUTHFUL LOVE.

Ditson had no idea of giving up the telltale foil. As he had said, he had placed it where it was safe, and he meant to keep it there.

Ditson knew that Hartwick tolerated him and made a companion of him to a certain extent simply because they both hated Merriwell, and the junior thought it possible the sophomore might be able to aid him in his plots against Frank.

Roland could see that Hartwick felt himself to be of superior mold, and in case Hartwick dropped the fight against Merriwell, he might drop Ditson at the same time.

It was Ditson's scheme to get a hold on Hartwick so the latter would not dare "throw him down," and he saw that the foil, which plainly showed it had been tampered with to make possible the least removal of the button, was the very thing to give him that hold.

"Oh, yes, I will give it up to Hartwick—nit!" he chuckled to himself. "I will work him now for the things I want and can't get through any other channel."

Hartwick had plenty of money. It seemed that Ditson was also well supplied with cash, but, in fact, he had spent altogether too much in his desperate effort to buy back his lost standing with his companions after his open disgrace.

Ditson had found that at Yale money could not purchase true friendship and popularity for a lad who had shown himself a traitor to his own class. But he did not give over the attempt till he had squandered enough to place him in somewhat cramped circumstances.

Then he resolved to live in a manner that would make others envy him, his narrow mind regarding that as one way of eventually becoming popular. He spent money lavishly on fine apartments, which he furnished in a manner that was gorgeous if not tasty, and he lost no opportunity to make a spread.

His incessant calls for money had greatly annoyed his father, and the parent had finally come on to New Haven to find out just why so much cash was needed to carry his son through.

That visit had not been pleasant for Roland, as his father promptly notified him that he would have to give up his luxurious style of living and get along like hundreds of other lads who had rich parents but did not make so much show. Then Roland was placed upon

an allowance, and was informed that he could not have a dollar more than the regular amount.

The thought of giving up his splendid apartments and his swell manner of living was gall and wormwood to Ditson. He fancied the fellows who regarded him with scorn would laugh and sneer and say he had proved himself an ass.

So he clung to the rooms and still kept up his manner of living, hoping to raise the wind some way and keep along in style. How he was to succeed in this he could not conceive till he became acquainted with Hartwick.

Immediately after being taken up by Hartwick, Ditson conceived the scheme of working Evan for money. He realized that in order to do so and keep it up without having to pay back what he borrowed he must get some sort of a hold on the fellow.

Thus it came about that Ditson pried into Hartwick's secrets and astonished Evan by his knowledge of certain unpleasant matters. Then came the bout in the gymnasium between Merriwell and Hartwick, after which Ditson smuggled out the telltale foil and concealed it. Then he knew he had the very hold on Hartwick that he desired, and he resolved to keep it. He lost no time in striking Hartwick for a loan, a thing he had not dared do before.

At first Evan had thought of refusing Ditson, but of a sudden he thought that the foil was in Roll's possession, and not caring to offend just then, he gave up twenty-five dollars.

Hartwick was determined to secure and destroy the foil, and he made Ditson promise over and over to surrender it.

Ditson did nothing of the kind, but within two days he struck Hartwick for another loan. Then Evan began to realize that he was being "worked," and he raised objections; but the final result was that he let Ditson have more money on the latter's promise to bring the foil that night without fail.

Of course Ditson did not keep his word. Then Hartwick was angry and he called Ditson some hard names. Ditson immediately assured Evan that he would not give up the foil till he got good and ready, ending by sneeringly asking the snared lad what he was going to do about it.

At that moment Hartwick longed to strangle Ditson, but he dared not lay a hand in violence on the fellow. At last he thoroughly understood Ditson's game. He tried to force Roll to give up the foil, but his efforts were unavailing.

With the utmost coolness and insolence, Ditson

ended by demanding twenty dollars of Hartwick—and got it!

From that time there was no reason why Hartwick could misunderstand his position, and he was desperate enough to do almost anything to extricate himself.

In the meantime Merriwell was acting as if there was not such a person as Evan Hartwick on the face of the earth, much to the wonderment of Rattleton, his roommate, and Jack Diamond.

Merriwell had declared that he would square the score with Hartwick, but Diamond marveled much how he was going about it. The Southerner could see no way for Frank to accomplish the task, unless he forced Hartwick to meet him in a fight and beat him into insensibility.

And Diamond was forced to confess to himself that such a thing could not give Merriwell satisfaction for the way he had been treated by Hartwick.

It must be confessed that how to square the score was a problem to Frank.

His natural inclination was to disgrace Hartwick, as Hartwick had attempted to disgrace him. This could be done by revealing the truth concerning the drugging of Frank at Mrs. Greydon's.

In order to reveal that, however, it would be necessary to disclose that Hartwick had induced Eunice

Darley to administer the drug, and such a disclosure would bring shame and disgrace upon the girl, which was something Frank had no desire to do.

So it happened that although Merriwell had absolute proof that Hartwick had plotted to publicly disgrace him by drugging him and making him appear drunk, he kept silent about the matter to avoid telling the entire truth.

Frank wondered not a little as to the hold Hartwick had obtained upon Eunice, for it had been plain that the fellow could compel her to aid him in carrying out his plans. That Evan and Eunice had known each other before coming to New Haven was apparent, but that did not solve the mystery.

At one time Frank had fancied that Eunice was in love with Evan, but he was forced to abandon that belief when he saw her doing everything she could to aid Hartwick in his efforts to capture the affections of Winnie Lee.

There could be no doubt that Hartwick had deliberately planned to mark Frank for life and Merriwell regretted that he had not been quick enough in his effort to obtain possession of the foil, which he believed would have shown the button had been removed and the point of the blade sharpened, after which the button was restored.

Had he obtained the foil, Frank could have squared the score with Hartwick by publicly proving that Even had made such a dastardly attempt.

Merriwell was a great believer in the saying that a scoundrel will work out his own destruction, and so he decided to let Hartwick quite alone and see what would happen. When the right opportunity came he would seize it.

He saw Hartwick and Ditson much together, and something told him that Evan was far from happy in the society of his apparent friend. The look on Hartwick's face betrayed that he had very little peace of mind.

In the meantime Frank was calling on Winnie Lee occasionally, and he was always welcome at her home. She had come to believe in his manliness and honor, and it would take more than a simple thing to cause her to doubt him.

Frank regarded Winnie as a splendid girl. He admired her for her beauty, her intellect, and her wit. She was light hearted and buoyant, with a few girlish ways, and a frankness that pleased Frank more than if she had always been conventional and dignified.

One night when Frank called, Winnie said:

"I received a letter from Eunice to-day, and she spoke of you."

"Really?" smiled Frank. "Then she has not forgotten me?"

"If you were to read her letters you would think not. She speaks of you in the highest terms. I think she is a charming girl, don't you?"

"I certainly do. She has magnificent eyes."

"Oh, yes," said Winnie, quickly. "And she is pretty—don't you think?"

"Rather pretty."

"And—and—she is nice?"

"Rather nice."

"Nicer than most girls? Nicer than any other girl you know?"

"Well, hardly that. There is one little girl who certainly pleases me much more than Miss Darley."

The color crept up into Winnie's cheeks, and she let her lashes droop, while her foot kept tapping the floor.

"What sort of a girl is it that you think nicer than Eunice?" she murmured.

They were sitting on the sofa, and happened to be the only ones in the parlor at that moment. Frank drew a little nearer.

"Well," he said, "she is a little rosebud, with a face that is bewitchingly pretty, eyes that are bits of blue from heaven, hair that has caught the sunshine in its meshes."

"She must be nice," Winnie almost whispered, and her head was bowed. "Won't you—won't you tell me who she is?"

"Yes, if you really wish me to."

"Of course I do."

"It is you, Winnie—you!"

She looked up slyly, her red lips pouting.

"Be careful, sir. You are very forward!"

"What's the use of being backward when one is crazy?" laughed Frank. "If this is a sample of the horrors of insanity, I wouldn't mind being slightly demented all the time."

She was forced to smile despite her efforts to appear somewhat indignant.

"Oh, I can't be angry with you if I try!" she cried. "You are a nuisance, Frank Merriwell, and I—I——"

"What?"

"I don't know."

His hand found hers, and he imprisoned her fingers, despite her movement to draw them away.

"Of course you can't be angry with me, Winnie," he said, softly. "Why should you be angry?"

"Oh, I don't know! After I received that letter from Eunice, she was so enthusiastic about you that I thought—I thought that—well, I was jealous!" she finished, blushing more than ever.

"Jealous of Miss Darley?"

"Yes," confessed the girl. "If you knew the things she said of you! I know she cares a great deal for you."

"Well, this is the most surprising news to me. I had a fancy that Miss Darley cared for quite another person."

"Who?"

"Evan Hartwick."

"Oh, no! She did seem to care for him before he deceived her by leading her to play that dreadful trick on you by telling her it was a harmless joke. She never seemed to be at all in love with him, but she told me what a splendid fellow he was, and she seemed sincere; but in her letter she says that even that was deception, for which she begs forgiveness."

Frank was greatly interested.

"Deception? If she did not think he was such a splendid fellow why should she resort to such deception?"

"Because she was afraid of him."

"Well, that is most remarkable. She must have been very much afraid of him to deceive her friends in such a manner."

"She was."

"I can't understand how a nice, refined girl like Eu-

nice Darley could be forced to introduce a scoundrel to her friends and praise him as a splendid fellow. It seems a wicked thing to do, and I doubt that there is an excuse for it."

"There is an excuse, Frank," asserted Winnie, seriously. "Hartwick compelled her to tell me all the fine things she said of him. She says so in her letters. She says he held a secret concerning her family that he declared he would divulge if she did not tell. He frightened her into the deception."

"The wretch!" cried Frank. "I never see him now that I do not feel a powerful desire to strangle him! I think he is the greatest scoundrel I ever knew!"

"He is a very bad fellow, and Eunice still fears him. She says he will try to get even some day."

"If he ever harms her I'll wring his worthless neck!"

"I am sure you can do it, Frank."

"Do it! I'd have done something to him long ago but for you. You made me promise not to hurt the fellow. Why don't you release me from that promise, Winnie? You must see that you are placing me in an awkward position. Here this Hartwick has tried in every conceivable manner to injure and disgrace me, and still I am not allowed to even things up with him."

"If you did, and repeated anything Eunice or I have told you, I know it would create trouble for both of us.

It is Eunice for whom I care the most. The secret that he holds—he would divulge it in a moment.”

“Look here, Winnie, you do not know all the dastardly things that villain has tried on me.”

“Not all of them?”

“No.”

“What is there I do not know?”

“His latest trick.”

“Tell me.”

Then Frank related how Hartwick had tried to mark him for life in the fencing bout. Winnie covered her face with her hands, uttering a little cry of horror when Merriwell explained how his enemy had torn the button from the foil and then lunged straight at his mask.

“If he had struck your mask—what then?” she gasped.

“The point of the foil would have gone through the meshes in a moment; my cheek might have been torn open, one of my eyes destroyed, or I might have been killed.”

Winnie grasped him and clung to him with both hands.

“Oh, Frank! Frank!” she whispered. “Just think of it! It is dreadful! I am trembling all over.”

He put his arm around her and drew her close, murmuring:

"It is past now, Winnie. I disarmed the wretch, and his dastardly attempt was a failure. Why, how you tremble, little one! Does the thought of my danger affect you like that? I did not think it would. Then, Winnie, dear little girl, you must care for me very much!"

Frank could feel her heart fluttering against his breast, her soft cheek was pressed against his, and their hands clung together.

A sudden silence fell upon them, a silence neither cared to rudely shock with words. Just then words seemed crude and barren and expressionless. Words could not convey their thoughts; silence was far more expressive.

To Winnie Frank Merriwell was a brave and noble hero—to her he was an old-time knight and she was his lady fair. He was gallant and true, ready to lay his life at her feet.

To Frank Winnie Lee was one of the sweetest girls he had ever known; fair as a flower, innocent as a bird, she impressed him powerfully, and made him feel ready to go through any danger, to face anything for her sake.

CHAPTER XIV.

A CALL ON BILLINGS.

"Stars in the summer night
Far in yon azure deeps,
Hide, hide your golden light—
She sleeps, my lady sleeps!"

"Jee whiskers, Frank!" cried Harry Rattleton, "you're getting sentimental lately. You have taken to poeting quoetry—I mean quoting poetry, and you are linging sove songs—hang it! I mean singing love songs every night."

Frank laughed and lay down the guitar on which he had been strumming.

"A little sentiment occasionally is good for a fellow," he declared. "I wouldn't give a cent for a chap who did not fall in love now and then."

"Now and then! How many times have you been in love, old man?"

"Oh, I don't know. I've lost count."

"Well, you deat the Butch—I mean beat the Dutch! I know you are smashed on Winnie Lee now, and I do not wonder. She is a gem of the first water, and her old man has the rocks, which is a point worth considering."

"That wouldn't make a bit of difference with me, my boy. If her father did not have a cent in the world, I'd think just as much of her, providing she was the same Winnie Lee she is now."

"Well, you have got it—bad. I did not suppose the case was quite so severe. But you may recover."

Just then there was a sudden burst of song outside:

"Old Moses kept a flower stand
At the corner of the street;
You put a quarter in his hand
To get a bouquet sweet.
He often made his blooming trade
Bring him in lots of pelf,
But whenever he gave his plants a drink
He took two drinks himself."

Then came the chorus, in which Frank and Harry joined:

"Old man Moses, he sells posies—
All he knows is the price of roses;
Old man Moses, he sells posies—
Red as a rose is Moses' nose is."

Then a band of laughing, roistering fellows burst into the room, crying out their greetings to the two occupants and making themselves quite at home, as if there was not the least doubt in the world about the welcome they would receive.

"We've brought Browning along, Merry," cried Halliday. "We found him all alone in his room shedding bitter tears. Asked him what the matter was,

and he said his grandfather was dead. Of course that was enough to cause us to express our sympathy, and we asked when the old gentleman passed away. Browning said fourteen years ago. Then we began to wonder why Browning was shedding tears over a grandfather who died fourteen years ago, and we made further inquiries. Browning explained that his grandfather had made an immense fortune in fire-escapes. Then Robinson said he should think Browning ought to be laughing over that instead of crying, and Bruce said he was crying because the old man had not been able to take one of his fire-escapes with him. Oh, say! we didn't do a thing to Browning!"

"That's right," murmured Bruce as he stretched his massive form on the couch. "I'll be in the hospital tomorrow. They threw everything in the room at me, and not one of 'em missed."

"Speaking about death," said Dismal Jones, solemnly, "when I die I want to be buried in a fireplace."

"Oh, you will be—you will be," nodded Griswold with a grin.

"In the fireplace?" asked Blossom, scratching his head. "What for?"

"So my ashes may mingle with those of the grate," answered Jones with a convulsive catching of the breath.

"Gentlemen! gentlemen! gentlemen!" palpitated Lewis Little. "Will some one be kind enough to open the window and give us a little fresh air? It is getting very thick in here."

"That's right," agreed Halliday. "Why, I can scarcely catch my breath."

"That makes me think," said Putnam. "I have a scheme if you play ball next spring, Halliday."

"What is it?"

"Put molasses on your hands."

"What for?"

"So you'll be able to catch flies."

"There are some others who had better try that," murmured Browning. "I think we need two or three niggers on our team."

"Niggers? What would they do?"

"Catch fowls."

Bruce looked around to see if anybody was going to throw something, and then settled back with a sigh of relief.

"They are coming pretty fast," laughed Merriwell. "Where do you fellows strike all these chestnuts? Some of them are pretty bad."

"We know it," confessed Jones, his face looking longer and sadder than ever. "We are trying to improve them by the company they are in."

"Oh, some of them are not so bad," protested Hallyday.

"What were you telling me just before we came in, Griswold?" asked Robinson. "You said something about attending a party last night."

"I said I was at a private hop."

"Oh, that was it."

"Yes, I got out of bed about two o'clock and stepped on a tack."

"Great Scott! it's another!" gurgled Robinson in disgust.

"It strikes me we had better get out into the open air," said Putnam. "What time is it now?"

"Oh, it is not ten yet."

"Well, let's all go down to Morey's, and on our way back we'll visit this fellow Billings."

"What's that?" asked Frank. "What are you going to do with Billings?"

"We are going to give him a smoke. You know he is a crank about tobacco—doesn't touch it and doesn't want other people to. He is making himself rather obnoxious for a freshman, and we have decided to smoke him out. Will you and Rattleton come along?"

"We'll go, but you know I don't smoke."

"Well, you can fight if we get into a row with the freshmen. The freshies are getting altogether too in-

dependent lately, and we may have to show them where they belong."

The prospect of an old-time rush or riot was enough to make Frank eager to go, and he quickly announced his willingness.

Some one rolled Browning off the couch to the floor, and he felt grieved over such treatment.

"Just see how much farther I must go to get to my feet," he sighed. "Such a waste of energy is something awful to contemplate. If all the energy there is wasted in the world in one day should be concentrated——"

"Smother him, somebody!" cried Halliday. "He's struck that strain, and he is a crank on it. He'll never stop unless he is choked off."

Browning got upon his feet with an effort.

"Young men," he said, solemnly, "you are very thoughtless and frivolous. If you had enjoyed the honor of being dropped a class, as I have, you would be much more sober and sedate. It really pains me when I see you so careless and unthinking. But I know that some of you have heads into which it would be impossible to drive a serious thought with a sledge hammer. Excuse my emotion. I feel these things deeply, as Griswold said, when he stepped on the tack."

He took out his handkerchief and blew his nose with a blast like a horn, and then wandered out.

The whole party descended to the street. The night was cold and clear. There was a moon, and the sky was studded with stars. The air was still, and all sounds seemed unusually distinct.

From some point came the music of a piano and violin. Singing and laughter could be heard. The windows were bright with lights.

Merriwell struck into a song, "Kathleen," and the others joined in the chorus:

"Kathleen, so fair and bright,
Star of eve and darkest night.
'Mid shady lanes and meadows green
I long to rove with sweet Kathleen."

Windows went up here and there that the occupants of the rooms might listen to the singing. In the party were four who had splendid voices, and "Kathleen" was followed by "Jingle Bells," "Rosalie," "Upidee," and "Bingo."

It was a merry party of bright-faced, honest-looking young fellows who went down to Morey's, where they lingered till near eleven.

Finally it was decided that the hour to visit Mr. Billings had arrived, and they sought out the house in which he was stopping.

It happened that Billings was in the very house where Frank and Harry had roomed during their freshman year. Further than that, he had the same room the boys had occupied, so they were thoroughly familiar with "the lay of the land."

The entire party was provided with masks, and these were adjusted just before the house was reached. Then Frank took the lead, ascended the steps, and, to his satisfaction and surprise, found the door slightly ajar.

"Oh, this is a cinch!" he exclaimed. "We'll get in on him before he knows anything about it."

But they did not. As they started to ascend the stairs a freshman started to come down. He saw them with their masks over their faces, and he fled, wildly shrieking:

"Lambda Chi! Lambda Chi!"

"Come on, fellows!" called Frank. "That will wake 'em all up. We'll make a rush for it."

Up the stairs they charged.

Billings' door was near the head of the first flight. He had heard the cries and noise, and he sought to fasten the door, which had been open slightly.

As the door was slammed to Frank hurled himself against it, and it flew open again, flinging Billings across the room.

"Good-evening, Mr. Billings," said Merriwell, coolly. "We thought we would give you a call, don't you know."

Billings caught up a chair and swung it above his head.

"Get out!" he cried, his face very pale. "Get out, or I will break your heads! Be lively!"

"Now don't—don't do anything so brash, my dear sir," said Frank in a soft and soothing voice as he walked directly up to the frightened freshman and took the chair from his hand. "Why, it would be very rude of you to break a person's head, don't you know."

Billings was dazed for a moment by Frank's nerve. Then he gave a yell and struck at Frank, who dodged the blow. The next moment the freshman lunged for the window, threw it open, and tried to get out.

"My dear, dear sir!" cried Frank as he caught Billings by the tail of his coat and drew him back, "is this the way you receive and welcome visitors who have come to make a pleasant little call on you? Sit down. Be calm. Close the door, boys, and pile everything you can against it. You'll need to do it, for the freshies will be clamoring for admittance directly."

CHAPTER XV.

A WILD NIGHT.

It seemed that in everything in which he was concerned Merriwell became the natural leader. He had a cool, quiet way of doing things—a way those who knew him admired, but found difficult to imitate.

Billings, however, had no thought of submitting quietly, and he made a desperate struggle to get out by the door before they could close and fasten it. He was restrained, however, and when he continued to struggle and make things unpleasant cords were produced and he was firmly tied to a chair.

"Oh, you fellows will have to settle for this!" he gasped. "My father'll never see me abused this way without doing something!"

"Your father is not present, Mr. Billings, so he is spared the spectacle," said Frank. "Now sit still, like a little man. We're not going to take your life without giving you a chance to say a word for yourself."

"You seem very high strung, Mr. Billings," said Browning, who was aroused somewhat now that the sport had begun. "Your nerves lie too near the sur-

face. We have just come in to have a little social talk with you."

"That's all," nodded Frank. "Brace the table against the door, fellows. Pull out his trunk and bed and make them useful. Put the dresser into the barricade. If we had a few nails we could make it solid."

The lads worked as if they were preparing for an assault by wild Indians, and it did not take them long to barricade the door as well as possible with the furniture and other stuff at their command.

"Now, gentlemen," said Frank, "we will have a little talk with our friend Mr. Billings."

"You are no friend of mine!" cried Billings. "None of you is a friend of mine!"

The boys produced cigarettes and cigars and began to light up. Two or three of them had purchased some very rank cigars for that particular occasion. They gathered close about Billings and began blowing smoke in his face, without seeming to do so intentionally.

Billings immediately grew pale. The slightest smell of a cigarette made him feel quite ill, and the cigarette smoke, mingled with the smoke of the rank cigars, was something awful.

"I wish you wouldn't smoke!" gasped the prisoner after a moment. "I can't stand it, you know—really I can't!"

"You do not seem to enjoy tobacco smoke," said Griswold. "Now, you should get used to it, Mr. Billings."

"That is quite right, Mr. Billings," nodded Frank. "You will observe I do not smoke, but I have accustomed myself to it, so I do not mind it at all."

"What are your views on tobacco smoking, Mr. Billings?" inquired Browning, who had a cigar, and who blew into the poor fellow's face a whiff of smoke that would have strangled a cat. "I understand you have very pronounced ideas."

"It is a crime—a positive crime!" cried Billings, fiercely.

"Will you be good enough to explain the difference between a positive crime and a negative crime, sir?"

"Oh, it is a filthy habit! I can't understand how human beings can indulge in it!"

"It is quite likely there are many things you do not understand at present, Mr. Billings," chirped Griswold, gravely. "When you get——"

Bang! A heavy knock on the door.

"Open this door!"

Bang! bang! bang!

The freshmen had arrived.

Not one of the sophomores gathered around Billings turned his head or paid the slightest attention to

the knocking on the door. But it was plain that they smoked all the harder, and Billings' face could scarcely be seen through the thick cloud of rank smoke that seemed to cling about his head.

"Break in the door, boys—break it in!" cried Billings, but his lungs filled with smoke, and he began to cough and strangle in a distressing manner.

Tears ran down Billings' cheeks, he gasped for breath, he choked.

"Don't you think you might become accustomed to smoke after a time if you were to live in it a while?" asked Halliday.

"I wouldn't — live — in it! I'd die!" gasped the freshman.

"That is a very foolish notion you have in your head," declared Merriwell. "Look at me," he went on, while the hammering on the door became louder and louder. "A person can become accustomed to almost anything. To some constitutions smoke seems really beneficial."

"Oh, I can't stand this much longer!" Billings almost sobbed.

When he sobbed he caught his breath, and that drew more smoke into his lungs. Then he had another violent fit of coughing, and nearly fell over, although tied fast to the chair.

The boys puffed away faster and faster, and the smoke became thicker and thicker. It almost seemed that it could be cut with a knife. They laughed and coughed and groaned. They did not mind that a furious crowd of freshmen was making fierce efforts to bang down the door.

"Please do not smoke any more!" pleaded Billings.

"Will you ever say that tobacco is not fit to use?"

"No! no!"

"Will you ever say smoke is fit to cure hams and herrings only?"

"Never!"

"Will you point the finger of scorn at cigarette smokers?"

"No! no!"

"Will you look at the smoker of a cigar as if he was not fit to be on the earth?"

"N-no!"

"Swear it!"

"Oh, I will do anything you ask if you will stop——"

Bang! crash! smash! The door was forced at last, and a furious gang of freshmen came howling into the room, climbing over the furniture, seeming to literally thirst for the blood of the sophs.

"Up, boys—up and at 'em!" rang out Frank Merriwell's order.

The sophs met the freshmen, and there was a lively fight for a few moments, which resulted in the retreat of the attacking party.

"Follow them up!" commanded Frank. "We must get out of the house now if we hope to get out of it alive."

Out of the room charged the sophs, and there was a fierce fracas in the hall and on the stairs. The sophomores clung together in a body, and forced their way down to the front door.

But when they reached the street they found freshmen gathering from all quarters. It was plain that a general alarm had been sent out, and the freshies had rallied to do up the enemy.

"We are in for a red-hot time," drawled Browning. "We had better get off York Street with the least possible delay."

They quickly formed in a compact mass for a rush, and then they went at the freshmen fiercely. They broke through, but there was a running fight all the way to the campus, where it became a wild scramble on the part of the freshmen to get at the sophomores and give them such a trouncing as they could never forget.

It was one of the wildest mobs seen at Yale since the old fighting days. It was not an ordinary rush.

Then came the cry of "Faculty! Faculty!"

There was a sudden scampering and scattering. Two men in long black coats were seen coming across the campus. One of the sophs was hurt so he could not run very fast, and he turned and staggered into the hands of two policemen.

"Frank!" palpitated a voice in Merriwell's ear as Rattleton came running to his side, "Diamond is pinched!"

"What's that?" cried Frank, stopping in his flight. "You don't mean that he is arrested?"

"Yes, he is arrested. Two cops have nabbed him!"

"Great Scott! It will go hard with him if he is locked up!"

"He will be expelled!"

"Sure! Where are they? Quick—call the fellows! We must save him! We must get him away from them!"

"This way!" fluttered Harry, and Frank followed his roommate at a run.

In a moment they saw the officers, who were holding the prisoner for the inspection of the two men in long black coats. A crowd had gathered at a little dis-

tance. The two professors were Such and Walters. Such was near-sighted.

"Come, fellows," cried Frank to the swarming lads. "We must take him away instantly!"

They understood and they answered with a cheer. There was a great rush at Frank's heels, and he led another charge.

The policemen drew their clubs. Professor Such had just stooped to peer into the face of the captive, when Frank bowled him over. As Such went down he clutched at empty air, caught the cap from Frank's head, and held it.

A second later the crowd was fighting with the two officers.

It was short, sharp work, and Diamond was rescued. Two policemen could do nothing with that wild mob, for freshmen and sophomores had joined in the rescue. The officers' clubs were taken from them, and their helmets were banged over their eyes, and they were left in a condition of almost complete wreck.

"I would give something to know what became of that cap I was wearing," said Frank when he and Harry were in their room once more.

"When did you lose it?" asked Harry, who was bathing his face, which bore marks of the fracas.

"That is what I am trying to remember, Great Scott!"

"What's the matter?"

"I know when I lost it."

"When?"

"In the charge on the professors and the officers."

"Well?"

"I bowled over Professor Such just as he was adjusting his glasses to take a look at Jack. As he went down I felt him snatch my cap. There was no time to get it back then, and——"

"Your funeral's to-morrow!" sung Harry, dolefully.

"It begins to look that way in case he held fast to the cap," admitted Frank, seriously. "I may be in a bad scrape, old man. It was an assault on a professor."

Harry looked frightened.

"Jove! Frank!" he gasped; "what if you should be Yaled from expellage—I mean expellaged from—— You know what I mean! Murder! What would 'Umpty-eight do?"

"It will be most unfortunate for me if he hung to that cap," said Frank, who understood what it might mean. "Come, Harry."

"What are you going to do?"

"Go out and look for it."

They went out to the spot where the encounter had taken place, but not a sign of the cap did they find. It was gone, and more than ever Frank feared that he was in a bad scrape.

"Old Such is pretty severe sometimes, and he is likely to demand that the fellow who upset him be punished," said Frank when they were back in the room again. "I fear I am in for it, Harry."

Harry was afraid so, too, but he did his best to cheer Frank up, although he could not appear very cheerful himself.

"If you are expelled I'll leave, too," he finally declared.

"That would be foolish," Frank gravely declared. "You will do nothing of that sort. But I may get out of it all right. I wonder what cap I wore? All my caps have my initials in them.

He began to look around, and it was not very long before he uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"What is it?" asked Harry.

"My caps are all here."

"Then you did not lose a cap, after all?"

"Yes, I did."

"How is that?"

"I lost a cap, but it was not one of my own. See

these old scalps," and he brought out a number of caps in his hands.

"Why, yes; those are the ones we swiped off the sophomores when we were freshmen."

"Exactly, my boy."

"I think I begin to understand. The cap you lost was——"

"One of the scalps we captured in our freshmen days."

Harry whistled, a look of great relief coming to his face.

"Jingoes! but you are lucky!" he cried. "That lets you out of this scrape without a struggle."

Frank shook his head.

"What is good luck for me may be hard luck for some other chap."

"How is that?"

"What if the other fellow's name was in the cap?"

"I never thought of that! Then the other fellow will have to get out of the scrape the best way he can. If he can prove an alibi, he is all right. Can't you tell whose cap it was?"

"I don't know. I marked the caps once by pinning the names of the owners from whom they were captured inside each of them, but some of the slips have been lost, so it is doubtful if I can tell all of them now."

I must have taken that out from the lot and had it around the room for some reason. When the gang was ready to start I did not notice the difference, and I wore the cap of some unlucky chap who may be raked over the coals for assaulting Professor Such."

"Well, I'll be hanged if I would be worried by that: You are well out of a nasty scrape, so go to bed and top like a sleep—I mean sleep like a top."

Harry tore off his clothes and was soon in bed. Frank followed his example, but took considerable time about it. He was worrying over the cap, fearing he had unwittingly gotten some other fellow into a bad fix.

When Frank got to bed he found it difficult to get asleep, which was something remarkable for him. He would have slept better had he known it was his own cap he had lost.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN ENEMY'S CAP.

In the morning another search was made for the cap, but it was not found.

The affair of the previous night made a topic for conversation among the students, and it came out that not a few juniors, fellows who had come out to see the sport, were in the rush to rescue the captive from the officers.

Much indignation at the action of the policemen was expressed. It was said to be an outrage. As if the college lads did not have a right to engage in a little fight among themselves without being arrested!

Morning found every man, freshman, sophomore and junior, loyal to Yale and each other. No matter if they had fought against each other the night before, the action of the officers was enough to make them ready to forget that and fight for each other in a moment.

The report got around that Professor Such had been seriously injured. He had been knocked down and trampled upon by the mob that was fighting with the policemen.

Later on there was another rumor. It was said that the injured professor claimed he had been assaulted by one of the students. He knew the one who did it; he had proof against the fellow.

The boys wondered what there could be in these rumors. They discussed them among themselves.

"Hey, Rattleton," called Lewis Little, "what do you know about this affair?"

"What affair?" asked Harry as he joined the knot of sophs on the campus.

"Why, this Professor Such affair. You know he has been hurt—says he was knocked down by one of the students. What do you know about it?"

"Not a blooming thing," declared Rattleton, grimly. "How should I know anything about it?"

"Oh, if it is true, somebody must know. Old Such is a busybody and a meddler, but I do not think there is a fellow who would deliberately strike the old man. He seems to think so, just the same, and it is said he has some kind of proof against the chap who did it. You and Merriwell led the rush on the officers, and I thought it possible you knew something about it."

"Well, I do not know a thing about it," lied Harry, who was thinking of Frank, and who could not have been induced to make such a statement had he felt that he was in danger himself, and not Merriwell.

Frank did not care to be questioned, and so he kept out of the way, remaining in his room nearly all day, save when he went to recitations.

Near night Rattleton broke in on Frank with a wild whoop that would have done credit to a Sioux Indian. He danced wildly about the room, upsetting things generally, and finally dropped on his couch, laughing till it seemed that he was in danger of losing his breath.

Frank gazed at his friend in astonishment, finally asking:

"What has struck you now, old man? It must be something funny."

"It is!" screamed Harry. "Oh, ha! ha! ha! It is the richest thing you ever heard! You will laugh dying—I mean die laughing when I tell it to you!"

"If it is so dangerous, possibly I hadn't better hear it."

"Oh, but you must! Ha! ha! ha! Ho! ho! ho! Why, if you had planned it all out yourself, you could not have done it so well! Rich! Why, it's a corker!"

"If I had planned it? What do you mean by that?"

"Just that! Oh, he! he! he! You'll never recover when I tell you! You'll drop right down on the floor and roll over and over! I hardly dare tell you for fear you will laugh yourself into an ireious sillness—I mean serious illness."

Frank wondered what in the world it could be that was so very funny. And how was he concerned in it? The affair of the previous evening—the cap!

Merriwell caught hold of Rattleton and gave him a shake.

“Tell me all about it! Is it something connected with last night?”

Harry could not speak, for he was still choked with laughter, and his face was crimson. He nodded wildly and roared again.

Merriwell's curiosity was fully aroused. What could there be that was so remarkably funny about it?

“Here, you lunatic!” he cried, shaking Harry again, “stop that laughing and tell me what it is!”

With a mighty effort, Harry got into condition to talk.

“You couldn't have done it better if you had planned it all out,” he again declared. “Do you know whose cap it was that Professor Such captured from your head last night?”

“Of course I do not! Whose cap was it?”

“Oh, ha! ha! ha! It belonged to Evan Hartwick! Ha! ha! ha! Oh! my! what a joke—what a joke!”

Merriwell's heart gave a quick leap.

Hartwick—Hartwick, his enemy! Hartwick had

owned the cap! Hartwick's name must have been on the cap, for the name of the owner was known.

A great surge of exultation swept over Frank Merriwell. Without planning to do so, he had struck his enemy a heavy blow. Of course he did not know what would be done about the matter, but he felt that Hartwick was in a serious scrape.

Hartwick might be expelled from college. Surely that would be the heaviest blow that could fall upon him.

"It was not planned," thought Frank. "I did not put up the job on the fellow. I did not know it was his cap. If he cannot prove that he had nothing to do with the affair, let him take his medicine! Why should I bother myself about a fellow who would exult over me if I were in the same fix? Why should I bother myself over a fellow who had done everything in his power to injure me—to disgrace me? I will not! I have squared the score with him without knowing I was doing so! I have evened up matters between us!"

Harry stopped laughing and stared at his friend, whose face wore a strange look of exultation and doubt.

"What is the matter with you?" cried Rattleton. "What are you looking so glum about? Why don't you laugh?"

"I fail to see anything humorous in the situation.

It is necessary for me to see something funny before I can laugh."

"Funny Whee jiz—no, jee whiz! what do you consider something funny? If this is not a funny deal, then I don't know beans! Why, I nearly boiled my burster—I mean burst my boiler holding in till I could get under cover where I could laugh."

"You seem to look at it in a different light from what I do."

"I can't see that there is but one way of looking at it. It is a horse on Hartwick. They'll pull him up before the faculty—I'll bet they will!"

"And he may be expelled."

"I wouldn't wonder a bit. Ha! ha! ha! You ought to laugh, Frank. He is the chap who drugged you at Mrs. Greydon's. He is the chap who tried to drug you on Manhattan Field. He is the chap who tried to mark you for life in the gymnasium."

"Surely I know all this."

"And you do not so much as smile a crack—I mean crack a smile."

Rattleton was astonished. He had expected Frank to laugh over the misfortune of his sneaking enemy, but Merriwell did not seem in the least inclined to mirth.

"If he had done the same things to me and was in

this scrape, I'd kick up my heels and roar. I don't know what you're made of! You are peculiar!"

Frank walked up and down the room, his face grave and thoughtful.

"This is a mighty serious matter for Evan Hartwick," he said.

"You bet it is!" nodded Harry. "He must know all about it by this time. I'll bet he doesn't feel like putting up any more of his dirty jobs on anybody!"

"If the truth were known, he would be let off."

"That's right, but why should the truth be known? It is known now to no one but you and me. We'll never tell."

Frank turned and stood looking gravely at his friend.

"We will know it just the same," he finally said.

"What of that, if it is known to no one else?"

It was plain that this argument did not satisfy Frank, who shook his head and resumed pacing the floor.

"It's not likely either of us will ever tell," said Harry. "Why, I'd have my toe nails pulled out before I would give it away. Twenty fellows asked me to-day if I knew anything about the upsetting of old Such, and I swore on my life that I did not."

"You lied."

Harry winced.

"What if I did? It was in a good cause."

"I don't know about that."

"Why, you don't think I would tell that I saw you upset the old man?"

"I know you well enough, Harry, not to think that."

Rattleton drew a breath of relief.

"Well, I don't see what you are driving at," he declared.

"Never mind now. I don't know as I quite understand my own feelings in this matter."

"Why, aren't you glad Hartwick is in the box?"

"I am glad, and then I am not. I am rather sorry I was the cause of getting him there—in such a manner."

"Jee whiskers! I thought that was the very thing that would tickle you most! It is never possible to tell just how you will look at a thing."

The more Frank thought the matter over the more he regretted that he had been in any way concerned in getting Hartwick into the scrape. He did not pity Hartwick. The trouble was that he knew Hartwick was not guilty.

His first feeling of satisfaction over Hartwick's misfortune gave way to a sensation of uncertainty. At one moment he would tell himself it served Evan right; the next moment he would be saying no man should suffer for the deed he did not commit.

The more Frank thought about the matter the less Rattleton could understand him. At last Harry gave up trying to understand his friend at all.

It was true that the cap had once belonged to Hartwick. His name had been pinned in it, and so there was no trouble about identifying the owner.

When asked if the cap belonged to him, Hartwick looked it over and acknowledged that it did. Then Professor Such was positive that he had been assaulted by Hartwick. He even declared that he had recognized his assailant, and it was Hartwick.

Hartwick did not attempt to deny that he had been concerned in the rush on the two policemen, but denied touching Profesor Such. He tried to tell that the cap had been stolen from him, but that assertion was met with incredulity, and Professor Such's declaration that he had recognized his assailant as Hartwick bore great weight.

A meeting of the faculty was called and the matter was considered. Professor Such was severe. He demanded that an example be made of Hartwick. He insisted that Hartwick be expelled.

Hartwick was called before the board and asked a few questions. He was not allowed to do anything but answer the questions put to him. Those questions

brought answers that seemed to settle beyond a doubt that Hartwick was the guilty one.

When Hartwick came out Ditson was waiting for him.

"Well?" said the latter, inquiringly.

"That was the crummiest deal a fellow ever got!" cried Hartwick, bitterly. "Oh, I like that sort of treatment!"

"Have they expelled you?" gasped Ditson.

"I don't know what they will do. They have not decided yet."

"What do you think they'll do?"

"It strikes me like a put-up job. I don't know what they will do. If I am fired the governor will be furious. I'll have to hustle for myself, sure."

"By Jove! that will be hard!"

"Hard! Well, I should so remark! What can I do to earn a living? If I believed in such a thing as retribution, I should say that was what I am up against now."

"Retribution for what?"

"Oh, lots of things!" said Hartwick, awkwardly. "The way I have treated Merriwell, for instance."

"Rot! Don't let such a silly notion get into your head."

"Oh, I can't help thinking of it!"

"Well, you are not expelled yet. You may be rusticated a while."

"If that is all I get I'll live through it, although the old man is bound to get hot under the collar over that."

"After it is over you can come back and get square with Merriwell."

To this Hartwick made no reply.

CHAPTER XVII.

A STRANGE WAY TO GET EVEN.

"They say Hartwick will be expelled beyond a doubt," said Rattleton as he again found Frank in his room.

Merriwell threw down the book he was conning.

"Who says so?"

"Oh, everybody. He was up before the board this afternoon, and he did not succeed in clearing himself. Professor Such is positive Hartwick was the one by whom he was assaulted, and he is forcing the matter. Most of the fellows believe Hartwick did upset the old professor, for he has never liked Such. No one dreams the cap came from your head. We hold that secret between us, Frank. Oh, yes, Hartwick will be expelled. He will have to go, and he'll trouble you no more."

"He'll not be expelled!"

"Hey? What's that?"

"I say he'll not be expelled."

"Why not?"

"Because I shall not allow it."

"How will you prevent it?"

"By going to the faculty and telling them the truth."

Rattleton caught his breath convulsively and fell over on the couch.

"Now you are kidding!" he cried.

"Nothing of the sort; I am in sober earnest."

Harry stared at Frank as if he could not believe his ears had not deceived him. He got up and looked Merriwell square in the face, and then he exploded:

"You have grown crazy or foolish at last! Too bad!"

"I am neither crazy nor foolish," said Frank with the greatest calmness. "I have thought the matter all over, and——"

"You have decided it is the right thing to befriend an enemy who has rubbed dirt all over you and who would do it again if he got a good chance? If that isn't foolishness I don't know."

"It is not that, Harry. You do not seem to fully understand the situation in which I am placed. Here is a fellow who may be expelled for an act that I committed. You and I know he is not guilty. We shall always know it. As for me, the knowledge that I was the cause of his expulsion—the knowledge that he was unjustly expelled—would be quite enough to make me blush with shame whenever I thought of it."

"But it is justice—it is squaring the score."

"It is squaring the score in a contemptible, under-

hand way—it is squaring the score as Evan Hartwick might attempt to square it with me! No, I cannot do it! My conscience will not let me!”

“And you will tell the faculty the truth?”

“Yes.”

“Good-by, Frank! Do you wish me to help you pack your stuff?”

“To pack?”

“Yes. You will be expelled in Hartwick’s place.”

“I may be, but I can’t help that. I shall clear my conscience, even though I am expelled.”

Harry knew it was quite useless to argue with Frank when the latter had settled his mind on anything, and yet he could not give up thus easily. He felt sure that it would ruin Merriwell’s college career if he persisted in telling the truth. He could not see but the fellow was robbing himself of the opportunity to even things up. It must be prevented some way. Wild schemes filled his head. He thought of getting Diamond, Robinson and a few more of Merriwell’s friends to come and compel him to remain silent, by force if necessary. Then he realized that such a thing could not be done, and he was completely unnerved and unstrung.

“Come, Harry,” said Frank, who had carefully ar-

ranged his necktie and dusted his clothes with a brush;
"I want you to go with me."

"Where are you going?"

"To see Professor Such."

In a dazed manner Harry found his hat, and the boys went out together. The electric lights were gleaming and a few spits of snow were falling.

Rattleton looked around, thinking to summon assistance, but he saw none of their particular friends.

Professor Such was a bachelor and he lived alone in apartments. Frank rang, and they were shown in by a servant, who explained that the professor had a caller in his study, but would soon be at liberty.

It happened that the door to the study was slightly ajar, and the boys heard the voices of the professor and his caller.

The latter was Evan Hartwick!

Hartwick was trying to convince the professor of his innocence. He was asking for mercy, but Such declared some one must serve as an "example." The man was cold and hard, and it was plain he did not believe Evan.

"I see it is no use!" Hartwick finally cried in despair. "I must submit to punishment for a thing I never did!"

"Why do you persist in saying that when you know

it is not true?" snapped the professor. "I saw you—I saw you with my eyes! I snatched the cap from your head as you knocked me down, and I held fast to it. You are the one who did the deed!"

"I beg your pardon, Professor Such, but Evan Hartwick is not the one who did it!"

Frank Merriwell was the speaker and he was standing in the doorway. His face was pale, but his voice was steady, and his attitude that of one who would not flinch. The professor started up, and Hartwick fell back, staring and gasping.

"Eh?" cried Such. "What did you say, sir?"

"I said that Evan Hartwick was not the person from whose head you snatched that cap."

"Then who was the person, sir?"

"I am the one!"

"Oh!" gasped Hartwick. "Is such a thing possible?"

Rattleton, no less pale than Frank, appeared at Merriwell's shoulder.

"You—you!" fluttered Professor Such. "How can that be? It was not your cap."

"No. You must know that the sophomores and freshmen have a custom of capturing 'scalps' from each other. I captured that cap during my freshman days, and I have had it ever since. I happened to be wearing

it on the night of the row with the freshmen. I was in the rush to rescue a comrade from the policemen. By accident I ran against you, and you snatched the cap from my head. That is the truth, sir. Mr. Hartwick is innocent, as he has told you. I am the guilty one, but I had no intention of assaulting a professor of the college. That was an accident. My sole thought was to rescue a friend from the officers. I am very sorry you were injured, professor, and I regret the affair more than I can tell. That is all. If any one must suffer I am the one."

After some moments of silence, Professor Such adjusted his spectacles, which he had removed to polish with his handkerchief, and looked Frank over.

"What induced you to come here and tell this?" he asked.

"The knowledge that an innocent person must suffer if I did not do so. My conscience would not allow me to remain silent."

"Young man," said Such, "it would be a good thing for the world if a few more persons had consciences like yours."

He then dismissed Hartwick, assuring him that he should not suffer if he was innocent.

Half an hour later Merriwell and Rattleton came

out. Hartwick was waiting for them. He approached them and said:

"Merriwell, I want to thank you for what you have done to-night."

Frank looked at him coldly. The light of an electric lamp fell on their faces. Hartwick held out his hand.

"Won't you shake hands?" he asked.

"No!"

The word came from Frank's lips like an explosion, and he repulsed Hartwick with a gesture.

"No, I will not shake hands! I have saved you to-night, at what cost to myself I do not yet know; but it was from no love of you, Evan Hartwick. I could have squared things between us by keeping silent, but my conscience would not let me. I am not an angel! You offer me your hand and your thanks. I refuse both! And somehow I feel that I am even with you, after all!"

Then Merriwell and Rattleton walked onward, leaving Hartwick staring after them and muttering to himself.

"He—won't—shake—hands, eh?" came from Hartwick's lips, harshly.

"All right—all right!"

And white and red in the face by turns he hurried to his room, where Roland Ditson was awaiting him.

"Well?" asked Ditson as Evan Hartwick entered the room and slammed the door behind him.

Hartwick's eyes glared, and his slightly-parted lips showed his gleaming teeth.

"Well!" he cried. "It is anything but well!"

"Then you have been expelled?" exclaimed Ditson, jumping up.

"No!"

"Not expelled? Then it cannot be so bad."

Ditson sank back on the couch where he had been lazily reclining, a sigh of relief coming from his lips.

"Not expelled, but insulted!" cried Hartwick. "Insulted as I've never been insulted before!"

Ditson had greatly feared that Hartwick would be expelled from college. As Ditson had kept on working Hartwick for loans which he had no thought of repaying, he felt that Evan's expulsion would be a catastrophe.

Ditson felt amused, and he laughed outright.

"Ha! ha! ha!" he exploded. "Insulted by Professor Such? Well, that is rather rich! How could that old stick insult you?"

"Not by Professor Such! Think I would mind anything he'd say? No! It was quite another person who insulted me."

"Who?"

"Merriwell!"

Ditson stiffened up and stared hard at his companion.

"What—again?" he said after a few minutes.

"Yes, again—and as I never have been insulted before."

"This is highly interesting," observed Ditson, with an expression of satisfaction settling on his crafty face.

"Tell me about it. How did he insult you?"

"By refusing to accept my hand when I offered it to him."

Once more Ditson shot up to his feet. He made a spring and landed before Hartwick, into whose eyes he stared, while he fluttered:

"What's that? What's that? Say it again, and say it slow? Your hand—you offered Frank Merriwell your hand—in friendship?"

"Yes," answered the other in a defiant manner, which, however, was not unmingled with shame. "I was just fool enough to do that thing!"

"Fool! fool! fool!" Ditson almost shrieked, wildly waving his clinched hands. "Why, you must have been crazy! I can't believe it now! You are giving me a jolly! I know you are!"

"It is no jolly. I actually offered to shake hands with Merriwell. I held out my hand to him, and——"

"He refused to take it? I do not blame him! You are sworn enemies, and you have done everything in your power to injure and disgrace Merriwell. If he had accepted your hand, he would have been a soft cad! And you—you—— I can't find words to express myself!"

"Nobody has asked you to express yourself," came coldly from Hartwick. "You are rather too free, Mr. Ditson. Remember that you are in my rooms, and I have——"

"Made a blooming jackass of yourself! I will tell you what I think, whether you wish me to or not."

"I have a mind to kick you out into the hall!"

"But you will not do anything of the sort," declared Ditson, insolently. "It would not be a healthy thing for you to kick me. I could make you very sorry for that kick."

Hartwick felt that this was true, and still, in his present condition, he was scarcely able to restrain himself.

Ditson suddenly grew calm, and he looked the other lad straight in the eye, his aspect plainly saying:

"Kick, and I will make you sorry you are on earth! You know I have the power to do it."

"Oh, I won't kick you!" said Evan, snapping his fingers. "What's the use? We would be fools to

quarrel! We are in sympathy with each other against Merriwell, so——”

“I thought we were, but I am beginning to believe I have fooled myself. You confess that you offered him your hand. And you are the one who has been so fierce to do him up, anyway! You—you offered him your hand!”

“And he refused it, which makes me still more his enemy than I was before.”

“But it does not excuse you for offering him your hand. That is something I cannot understand.”

“I will explain it.”

“Do so.”

“At your suggestion, I went to Professor Such. I saw him alone, and I told him the whole truth concerning the rush and the part I took in it. He had urged that I be expelled, and he said he would not ask the board to be merciful. That was all there was to the matter.”

“That’s like the old sinner. He’s set as the hills. But you said you were not expelled. It seems that you are likely to be.”

“I am not.”

“Eh? How’s that?”

“I have been saved.”

“How? Who by?”

"While I was talking with the professor the door-bell rang. I heard it, and I presume the visitors were shown into the parlor, off which is old Such's study. We were in the study. I did not observe that the door was not securely closed, but it could not have been. The visitors in the parlor heard me pleading with the professor. They heard me express my utter despair and say there was no show to obtain justice. They heard the professor state that he was positive I had assaulted him. Then one of the callers appeared at the door and calmly informed the old man that I was not the guilty one."

"Whew!" whistled Ditson. "Well, may I be hanged! That was decidedly interesting and dramatic!"

"It staggered me, but I was still more staggered when this person confessed that he himself had upset the professor, and that the cap, which was a 'scalp' he had captured from me long before, had been snatched from his head."

"Staggered! Jeewhittaker! I should have fainted on the spot!"

"I have told you exactly what happened, and it was the appearance and confession of this person that saved me from expulsion. They will not expel me now. I remained long enough to make sure of that. The pro-

fessor will see to that matter. I do not know what they will do to the other fellow."

"The other fellow—who was it?"

"Frank Merriwell!"

"Merriwell?" Ditson gasped. "Impossible! You're kidding!"

"I am speaking the sober truth," declared Hartwick. "It was Merriwell who had overheard our talk! It was Merriwell who appeared at the door! It was Merriwell who declared me innocent because he himself was the guilty one!"

Ditson staggered to the couch, upon which he weakly dropped.

"What was the matter with the fellow?" he faintly asked. "Was he daft? He must have been crazy!"

"He was not. He said that he had heard our talk, and that he came there to-night to tell the truth and save one who was innocent. Rattleton was with him. Rattleton seemed scared, but Merriwell was cool and earnest. His manner and his words convinced old Such, who was forced to confess that he had not been certain it was I from whose head he snatched the cap. Merriwell was backed up in all he said by Rattleton."

Roland took out his handkerchief and mopped his face.

"I don't understand how you happen to be living

still," he observed. "I should have dropped dead had I been in your place."

"It nearly overcame me," said Hartwick. "I could not believe it possible. The professor was touched. He asked Merriwell why he had come there and acknowledged his guilt. Merriwell said he had done so because he would not remain silent and see an innocent person suffer for something he—Merriwell—had done. Such complimented him on his honesty, and I saw that Merriwell will be let off easily. Then the professor told me he would see that I was cleared of all blame, and told me I might go. I went, and left Merriwell and Rattleton there."

"Well, I fail to see when Merriwell insulted you. Why, the blooming chump!"

"Wait," came grimly from Hartwick's lips. "You have not heard all. I thought it must be that Merriwell would be ready to shake hands and let bygones be bygones."

"That was natural."

"Well, I waited for him outside."

"And that shows where you played the fool."

"I confess it. I fairly compelled myself to wait. I will not say that I had the heart to thank Merriwell and offer him my hand, for I should lie. I felt that I was defeated all around, and he had kept me from

going out into the world and hustling, as I knew the governor would not support me if I were expelled. I said to myself, 'Old fellow, try to make an impression with Merriwell. Make him think you are grateful. It is policy. He will be glad to shake hands.' So I waited for him."

"Well?"

"He came out. Rattleton was still with him. I met them under a lamp and thanked him. Then I offered my hand."

Hartwick grated his teeth and a look of fury came to his face, as if the remembrance of what followed was too much for him to endure. Had Merriwell seen the fellow at that moment he would have known how heavily he had struck Hartwick.

"And he refused to shake?" cried Ditson, unable to repress his delight. "Ha! ha! ha! Oh, what a corker! That was a horse on you, Hartwick!"

"He scorned me!" hissed Evan. "He told me he refused both my thanks and my hand! He told me he had not revealed the truth to Professor Such out of the least regard for me or my feelings, but simply to ease his own conscience, as he could not see his worst enemy expelled for an act he himself had committed."

"Well, you may count yourself mighty lucky that Merriwell has that sort of a conscience."

"He gave me such a look!" Evan went on as if Ditson had not spoken. "It was as if I had been the most contemptible thing on the face of the earth! You don't know how it cut me! He said he might have remained silent and thus squared the score between us, but, although he had not done so, he felt that he was even with me, after all. And by the eternal skies! I felt it at that moment! I felt mean and miserable and contemptuous. I know my face betrayed shame! Think of it! Oh, great heavens! It nearly drives me out of my senses!"

Hartwick was indeed frantic with the thought of the shame of that moment. He tore about the room, smiting his hands together and almost foaming at the mouth.

Ditson sat on the sofa and hugged himself with satisfaction. He had no regard for Hartwick's feelings. But he knew that from that night Evan would hate Frank Merriwell more intensely than ever before, and that gave Ditson intense delight.

It was some moments before Hartwick calmed down at all. He rushed into the sleeping-room and came out with a vial in his hand. He tried to turn something from the vial into a glass. It was empty. Then he sat down, pressing his hands to his side and looking pale and in pain.

"What's the matter?" asked Roland in sudden alarm.

"My old trouble," came faintly from Hartwick's lips. "It has not bothered me for some time."

"Is it your heart?"

"Yes. The doctor said it was weakened by too much cigarette smoking. He gave me some medicine. I used to have faint spells after severe exertion, and there was a pain in my heart. I have not smoked much lately, and the spells have gradually left me. When I took the last medicine I thought I would not need any more. My excitement just now brought on a mild attack, and I didn't know but there was a little medicine left in the bottle. Let me lie down on that couch, Roll. Help me over there."

Ditson hastened to do so, wondering that he had never known of Hartwick's affliction before. He knew Hartwick must have taken the greatest pains to hide the truth concerning his trouble.

Evan was weak as a child, and he breathed heavily after lying down. Ditson was greatly alarmed and asked if he should not go for a physician.

"No! no!" said Evan. "I am better now. I'll be all right in a few moments. Don't worry about me. I'll never die till I have gotten back at Frank Merriwell for the dirt he rubbed on me this night!"

Roland sat down and lighted a cigarette.

"I don't believe it could have been these that gave you the trouble," he said. "I have heard fellows blow about them, but I take no stock in it. They're harmless."

"If a fellow did not smoke more than three or four a day I think they would not harm him," said Hartwick; "but who is able to tie himself down to that number after he gets so he cares for them? There's not one person in ten thousand. I smoke them occasionally now, but I know it means sure death if I smoke many, and that keeps me in check."

"Oh, well, a fellow's got to die some way," said Ditson, as if he was utterly reckless of life.

This caused Hartwick to smile, for he knew Ditson was a natural coward.

After a while Evan sat up.

"It has passed now," he said. "I should not have been attacked if I had not become so wrought up over Merriwell! I must get some more of this medicine."

He arose and looked in a large mirror.

"He rubbed dirt on me!" he muttered, the words coming through his teeth with a hissing sound. "But I will get back at him with interest! I will find a way! He saved me to insult me and cover me with shame!

Does he think the matter is even? Does he fancy the score is squared? Ha! ha! ha! He shall find that Evan Hartwick knows no mercy for one he hates. I will strike Frank Merriwell a blow that will crush him!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

RETROSPECTIVE.

Not a few of Frank Merriwell's friends and acquaintances declared he was a fool to make the confession he did in order to prevent his worst enemy from being expelled from college. Not a few of them frankly asserted that they would not have done the same thing for a fellow like Hartwick had they been in Merriwell's place.

Still, the very ones who said Frank was foolish secretly admired him for his folly. They saw that he was a fellow who had a conscience that would not allow his bitterest foe to suffer for an act that had been committed by himself, not by his foe.

It is true there are not many lads who would have cleared an unscrupulous enemy from such a charge by placing themselves in the unenviable position which that enemy occupied. It was not physical courage that led Frank to do such a thing, but it was true moral courage, a qualification which far excels mere physical courage.

A boy who is easily influenced to do things he knows is wrong may be a lad who will not shrink from

danger to life and limb. It is possible that he may be daring and brave in a certain way, and still, at the same time, he may be almost utterly lacking in moral courage.

Such a lad might not hesitate to place his own life in peril to save the life of another, and yet he might be induced to smoke, drink, swear, or do things even worse, knowing all the while that he was doing wrong. He sees others doing such things, and he fears the ridicule of his companions if he does not imitate them. They will jolly him if he refuses to drink, and so he drinks. He does not want to drink and he dislikes the taste of liquor, yet he takes it, pretending he does like it. He has not the moral courage to refuse.

On the other hand, a weak little fellow who fears a toad or a mouse may have sufficient moral courage to firmly refuse to do anything he knows is wrong.

The fellows with physical courage are admired, while the chances are that the ones with simple moral courage are held in contempt. Yet the hero with moral courage is the greater hero of the two.

Sometimes it happens that a lad has both physical and moral courage. Then he is a hero indeed!

Such a lad was Frank Merriwell. He could and would refuse to drink or smoke, because he had no taste for drinking and smoking, and he knew such

habits would do him no good, and they were pretty sure to do him harm.

He could refuse to do anything that was absolutely wrong, and yet no fellow ever loved honest sport more. There was nothing of the milksop about Merriwell. He was not the Sunday-school good boy who would not fight. He believed that any lad should have a stiff backbone and be prepared to fight for his rights.

At the same time, there was nothing of the bully in Frank. He hated a bully, and he was ever ready to take up the cause of the weak against an oppressor. If he saw two dogs fighting his sympathy was with the under dog.

In this respect he was much unlike the ordinary human being, who is prone to admire and cheer the dog on top, no matter if he is the aggressor and entirely in the wrong.

There were many other ways in which Frank was not like the ordinary human being, and Harry Rattleton, who had tried to fathom Merriwell's nature, had given over the task in despair, confessing he never could tell "which way Merry would hop if you threw anything at him, but it was generally the other way."

When Merriwell first entered Yale he was ridiculed in an unmerciful fashion because he would not join

the other lads in their drinking and smoking parties and drink and smoke like the others. Not a few were willing to wager that he would be punishing as much stuff—by which liquor, beer, or wine was meant—as any of them in less than a year.

A year had passed, and still Frank neither drank nor smoked. He seemed to enjoy being with the fellows when they were drinking and smoking. He could tell a good story, sing a song, and he would spend as much money as anybody.

It had not taken his acquaintances long to discover that he was no cad or milksop, and they began to admire him and wonder at his nerve and self-reliance. They told each other that he was one fellow in ten thousand. He became popular, and he was a natural leader in his set.

Before he became a sophomore Merriwell had been spotted for the societies. It was said that he was sure of being able to take his choice among them, which was rather remarkable, for at Yale a fellow who is wanted by one society often is not wanted at all by another.

For all that he took such an interest in athletics, Frank had some literary tastes, and not a few squibs, articles, and poems in the college papers were from his pen.

Occasionally Harry would waken at night and find Frank busily writing at the table. At first he wondered that his friend should write so many letters, and it was not for some time that he discovered Frank was dashing off an "effusion" of some kind for one of the papers.

This was employment that Frank thoroughly enjoyed, but his studies and athletics would not permit him to give as much time to it as he desired.

The first year at college is the hardest. After the second year the work grows lighter and the student has more time. Rattleton wondered at the amount of work and the number of things Frank had accomplished during the first year. It was simply marvelous to Rattleton.

The secret of Frank's success was his wonderful energy and the fact that he wasted very little time. He did have his periods of relaxation, but he seemed to make up for them all by the marvelous way he would push things at other times.

Bruce Browning, who was the laziest fellow in college without exception, called Merriwell a steam engine. Browning considered himself a philosopher. He declared that the idea of wearing out instead of rusting out was "all rot." "Any fellow might make

a mule of himself who wanted to," said Bruce; "I do not care for that sort of thing."

And still, during his first year at Yale, Browning had been a "chieftain bold." He had grown fleshy since those days. Then he was stout and powerful, and he had made things hum, figuratively speaking.

When Frank entered Yale Browning was known as the "King of the Sophomores." He had begun to take things easy and get fleshy, but his brain was still active, and he was an adept at planning pranks and leading in wild escapades.

Hartwick was Browning's roommate at that time. He had given Merriwell very little attention, although taking a dislike to Frank immediately. Hartwick felt himself to be a person of considerable importance, and he would not deign to bother with freshmen.

Browning, however, found the leader of the freshmen aggressive, and he had made several attempts to get the best of Frank and his friends.

To the dismay of Bruce, he found in Frank Merriwell a foeman who refused to be squelched. And Merriwell had a way of turning the tables on Browning that angered and embarrassed the "king." Browning was forced to give a great deal of his attention to Merriwell and the freshmen, and as a natural result he seriously neglected his studies. In the end he was

dropped a class, and he that had been a monarch was monarch no more.

As soon as Browning was dropped Hartwick promptly cut him in the most caddish manner. Once Browning had considered Hartwick as his firm friend, but he found that friendship ceased the moment they were in different classes.

Browning's spirit was broken in a measure. He no longer aspired to be a leader, but he was quite content to recognize Merriwell as his superior. In fact, his admiration for Frank increased daily, although he had a way of ridiculing Frank's restlessness and energy.

Frank could have quite crushed Browning had he been so inclined, for a fellow who has been dropped seems to have lost his place entirely. But Frank was not that sort of a lad. He met Bruce with outstretched hands, and welcomed him to the ranks of "good old 'Umpty-eight." He made Bruce feel that, after all, it was not such a terrible misfortune to be dropped.

Browning entertained a strong feeling of resentment for Hartwick. When he heard what Merriwell had done Bruce groaned in agony of spirit. He knew Hartwick had done everything in his power to injure Frank, and he could not understand a fellow who

would retaliate by pulling Hartwick out of such a scrape.

"Oh, if I'd had that chance!" said Bruce. "I wouldn't have done a thing to Mr. Hartwick—not a thing!"

Frank was well satisfied with himself after he had cleared his conscience by telling the truth and saving Hartwick.

"Even if I am expelled I'll feel that I did right, and I'll have nothing to regret," he thought.

But he was not expelled. Professor Such, although inclined to be stern and harsh, had been touched by Merriwell's honesty and manliness. Later on he found out that Merriwell and Hartwick were enemies, and then he actually admired Frank. He informed the faculty that he was certain Merriwell had intended him no bodily harm, but had been leading the rush to rescue a comrade from the policemen, just as he claimed. He urged that Merriwell be let off lightly, so Frank was called up and reprimanded in a manner that was half a compliment for his manly action, and there the matter ended so far as the faculty was concerned.

But it did not end there with Evan Hartwick.

Merriwell's refusal to accept Hartwick's hand or his thanks was sufficient to make Evan more bitter than ever; but he was shrewd enough not to do anything

openly and in a hurry to harm Frank. He knew he would be watched, and so he kept quiet for a time.

It began to look as if Frank's foes had decided to let him alone at last, and Rattleton, who had fiercely opposed his friend's determination to tell the truth and save Hartwick, was obliged to confess that Merry's way had been the best, after all.

"Sometimes," he said, "when you want to do a thing it seems just exactly the wrong thing to do; but I've noticed that it almost always turns out to be for the best. You've got a hong led—I mean a long head."

"Thank you!" laughed Frank. "I don't mind that, if it is not a swelled head. The chap with the swelled head is very unfortunate. I do not know of another disease so weakening and dangerous as the swelled head."

"What I admired most," declared Harry, "was the way you got in on Hartwick when he wanted to shake hands. Why, he actually turned green! If you had plotted and planned the thing out from start to finish, you could not have hit him harder."

"Well, it is all over now," said Frank, "and I hope he will let me alone. If he keeps away from me I'll agree not to bother him."

"That is first rate, but he will not keep away from you, my boy. He is not that kind."

"What makes you think so?"

"I could see it in his face. When you refused to shake hands with him he was so mortified that he longed to kill you on the spot. That was something on your part that he had not anticipated. He had fancied that a chap who was soft enough to do what you did for an enemy would be more than pleased to bury the hatchet and smoke the pipe of peace."

"If he lets me alone I will not trouble him any more, for I feel that I am square with him; but if he does not let me alone I'll give him blow for blow till he is tired of warfare."

It began to seem that Harry had made a mistake in thinking Hartwick would trouble Frank any more. Merriwell never seemed to see Evan, although they sometimes came face to face. The enemies utterly ignored each other, but it was plain that Frank never tried to avoid Hartwick, while Evan took precautions not to come face to face with Merriwell.

Evan Hartwick had been one of the most careful men in college about his dress, but, to the surprise of those who knew him best, he suddenly became careless and neglectful as to his clothes. He did not always appear in fresh linen, his boots were not constantly polished, his hats were not brushed, and his neckties were not of the very latest patterns.

Ditson was one of the first to observe Hartwick's growing disregard for his personal appearance, and Ditson also noticed that Evan was drinking far more than usual.

Hartwick had a way of going down to Morey's or Traeger's and sitting by himself in some obscure corner, where he would spend his time in drinking Scotch whiskey and glowering at everything and every one in the immediate vicinity.

It was noticeable that what he drank never seemed to enliven Hartwick and put him in better spirits. Instead of that, as he continued to drink he became more and more sullen and depressed.

Some of the fellows rather pitied Evan, and they tried to talk with him and jolly him up, but these efforts were failures and were seldom repeated.

Ditson was the only one who seemed to have the full confidence of Hartwick, and this was true only as to outward appearances, for Hartwick was shy of Roland when he had not drunk beyond his capacity.

One day, however, Hartwick felt like talking, and he turned to Ditson as the only person whom he dared trust. They were in Ditson's gaudily-furnished apartments.

"Merriwell thinks I have let up on him," Evan be-

gan, "but he is going to find out his mistake pretty soon."

"It does look as if you are a quitter," grinned Roll in an aggravating manner. "I imagine all the fellows think so."

"You imagine—you imagine!" snarled Hartwick. "What right have you to imagine anything? You have a great imagination, you have!"

"There is no imagination to the fact that Merriwell seems to have broken your spirit completely, my dear boy."

"Oh, there isn't! Well, have it as you like!"

"You used to be dressy and precise about your personal appearance. Now you are on the bum. You don't seem to care how you look."

"Whose business is it? I had money once, but you get it all now, you infernal bloodsucker!"

"I wouldn't call names, if I were you, Hartwick, old man. It is not pleasant. Who has been your closest friend? Who has stuck by you in everything? Who is the one to whom you can unbosom yourself freely? Little Roland! You can afford to loan such a comrade a few paltry plunks to tide him over."

"Tide him over! Look at these rooms! They are out of sight! Everything is luxurious here. You even

have a private bath with the suit. I have none of these luxuries. I live simply."

"You know as well as I why I live this way. I want to show the old crowd that were friendly to me once what they have missed by not sticking to me. I always find a way to flash a roll whenever I am in the presence of any of them."

"That's foolishness," declared Hartwick. "What do they care? Get even with them, as I will get even with Merriwell."

"You are not doing much to get even."

"How do you know what I am doing?"

"I judge from appearances."

"That's where you fool yourself. You do not know all that is going on, young man."

"All right; let it go at that. What are you doing?"

"I'll tell you what I have been doing."

"Do!"

"I have had a private detective in my employ for some time."

"A private detective?"

"Exactly," nodded Hartwick, who seemed to enjoy Roland's astonishment. "That is what I said."

"But what can you want of a private detective?"

"He has been engaged in looking up Frank Merriwell's history and record."

"Whew!" whistled Ditson. "What's that for?"

"I will tell you what it is for. You know that Merriwell cut me out with Winnie Lee. He thinks her his queen now, and she is stuck on him. The way to hit Merriwell is through her. I have been looking for some stain on Merriwell's record or that of his family, so that I may expose him to Winnie. If I can turn her against him it will be one of the greatest blows I can give him."

Ditson showed unusual interest.

"That is right," he agreed. "And you are not going to involve yourself in this way. But can you find out anything that will hurt Merriwell with Miss Lee?"

"Can I?" cried Hartwick, triumphantly. "I have! Wait till the time comes for me to strike. I will make him regret that he ever came across the track of Evan Hartwick! I will make Winnie turn against him and regard him with contempt. I have already learned enough to accomplish this!"

CHAPTER XIX.

WINNIE LEE AGAIN.

Winnie Lee was a charming girl, and she was in love with Frank Merriwell in a girlish way.

As we know, Frank had admired Winnie greatly the first time he saw her, and his admiration grew when he came to know her better.

She was a girl who "wore well," for she was not all giddiness and gush. She could talk in an intelligent way about college athletics, and she was a perfect crank on football.

Frank called upon her at her home. She was the only girl he had met since entering college for whom he cared, and he did care very much for Winnie. He called her his queen, which was Yale slang for best girl.

Winnie knew all about the trouble between Merriwell and Hartwick, and she learned of Frank's act shortly after he saved Hartwick from expulsion.

As may be imagined, this noble generosity—as it seemed—toward an enemy made Frank appear more than ever like a hero, and the next time he called she

tried to find words to tell him how much she admired him for what he had done.

"You dear fellow!" she said. "I do not believe there is another boy in the whole world who would have done such a thing for an enemy like Hartwick!"

"I think you have mistaken my motive in doing what I did, Winnie," said Frank, gravely. "I do not wish to be thought better than I am, and so I will tell you I did not do this for Hartwick's sake."

"But you did not have to tell, did you?"

"No."

"Then why did you?"

"Because I felt I would be a most despicable coward if I did not. I told the truth, Winnie, to clear my conscience, and not to clear Evan Hartwick."

"There are few fellows who would have done it. It was a noble deed, Frank, and I am glad you did it, for you saved him from expulsion."

A cloud gathered on Frank's face, and he regarded Winnie doubtingly, biting his lips the while.

She saw the sudden change in him and she wondered at it.

"Why, what is the matter, Frank?" she asked, looking into his eyes.

"Oh, nothing," was his evasive answer.

But she was not to be deceived in that manner.

"I know there is something the matter," she declared. "Your face changed suddenly. Did I say anything wrong?"

"No! no!"

"Then what is it? You must tell me, Frank, for you cannot deceive me. What caused your face to change?"

"Oh, well, it was foolishness, I suppose," laughed Frank, in some confusion. "But I—I was jealous!"

"Oh, my!" she cried, starting back. "Jealous? You? Of whom?"

"Now don't be angry, Winnie! If you question me this way you'll force me to tell. I can't get out of it."

"Of course you cannot! You must tell, you naughty fellow! Of whom were you jealous, sir?"

"Of Evan Hartwick."

"Frank Merriwell, I didn't think that of you!"

Winnie seemed shocked and on the verge of tears. They were quite alone, and Frank quickly passed his arm about her, saying softly in her ear:

"There, there, Winnie! You promised me you would not be angry."

"I am not angry, but I am surprised and hurt. The idea that you should be jealous of Hartwick!"

"But you know he was very attentive to you once, and you seemed to care for him at that time."

"I never cared for him much. I never cared for him the same as—as—as I do for—for you."

"Of course! I should have known! I am a stupid, blundering fellow, Winnie, and I ask your pardon! But you seemed so glad because he had not been expelled, and you spoke of him in a way that aroused me, despite my better judgment."

"I do not think I ought to forgive you at all," she said, teasingly, as she drew away. "Of course I will not be angry, for I have given my promise, but I believe you should be punished, and——"

"Just to think I was so foolish has been punishment enough already, Winnie dear!" pleaded Frank. "Don't make it harder, my little queen! If you do——"

"What then?" she teasingly asked, trying to appear serious, while there was a laughing mischief in her eyes.

"I'll do something," threatened Frank.

"What?"

"Oh, something desperate!"

"You frighten me! I wonder what it could be?"

"I'll—I'll—I'll kiss you!" exploded Frank, at a loss to think of anything else that he could do.

She burst into a merry peal of girlish laughter, clapping her hands.

"Oh, you bold, bold, bad boy!" she cried. "You are

getting desperate altogether too often of late. The first thing you know papa will drop in some time and catch you. Then he will ask you for an explanation."

"I'll explain."

"How?"

"Scientists declare kissing dangerous—they say it transmits germs. I shall explain that we are experimenting to see if the scientists are right."

"Then you will be pretty sure to come to the conclusion directly afterward that they are," said Winnie, with a teasing twinkle in her eye, "for it is quite likely that papa will violently eject you from the house. By the time you reach the sidewalk you will decide that kissing is dangerous in some instances."

"Well, if that is the way it is likely to happen, I am going to be careful that he does not catch me."

"That's right, Frank," laughed the girl; "but you need not be afraid just now, for he is not at home."

Frank was not slow, and that was all the hint he needed in that instance. He made another venture without delay.

"Now," said Winnie as they sat very close together, "I have some news for you, you naughty, bad boy."

"What is it, little queen?"

"Eunice is coming down to spend the spring in New Haven."

"Eunice Darley?"

"Yes. You know she would have stayed longer before, but Hartwick drove her away. When she found out how bad he really was and what he was compelling her to do, she was horrified, and she went away as soon as she could."

"But not without telling me the truth concerning Hartwick and clearing me in your eyes, Winnie. I think Eunice is a splendid girl, and she has the most beautiful eyes—— What's the matter, Winnie?"

"Oh, nothing at all! Go on—do go on!"

Winnie had suddenly drawn away and was sitting up very straight and prim, with a severe look on her face.

For one moment Frank was perplexed, and then he solved the mystery of her sudden move, and he chuckled to himself.

"She has the most fascinating eyes I ever saw," he declared. "They actually have hypnotic power."

"They must have!" came sarcastically from Winnie. "They hypnotized you so that you did not see her when she put the drug into a glass of water you afterward drank."

"That is quite true, but you must remember that I did not know you very well at that time, Winnie. I had only just been introduced to you, and Eunice Dar-

ley was your closest friend, so why should I not cultivate her? for by so doing I might get nearer to you."

The girl's face relaxed a bit despite herself, but she said:

"Oh, you have the nicest way of getting around things! You really try to make me think you were attentive to Eunice because you thought so much of me. I never saw a fellow like you! I'll bet anything you have had a dozen girls, Frank Merriwell!"

"Oh, not so many as that, Winnie! Don't set it so high."

"Well, then, I will let you set it. How many have you had, sir?"

Frank realized that her mood had changed, and she was now in the proper spirit to be easily teased.

Now, Frank was rather crafty in a certain way, for he had made a study of girls, and he had found that it does not do to give any girl the impression that she is the only one you have ever paid attentions.

Frank began to laugh. He felt like teasing Winnie a bit, for she lost no opportunity to tease him.

Winnie arose to her feet. She stamped her foot and cried:

"You have not answered me, sir!"

"I humbly beg your pardon," came with sudden

gravity from the lad's lips. "What was your question?"

"I asked you how many other girls you have ever had."

Not more than eight or ten, I assure you," said Frank, with continued gravity.

"Oh, indeed! Then you must have been a genuine masher, and——"

"Oh, I protest!" cried Frank, quickly. "If there is anything I despise it is a masher!"

"So do I, and any fellow who has had eight or ten girls must be a masher. I do not care to have anything to do with such a person."

"Winnie!"

"Mr. Merriwell!"

Now Frank was alarmed,. He sprang to his feet, and she retreated haughtily before him.

"Winnie!" he cried again, going toward her with hands outstretched.

"Stop!" she commanded, and she was as imperious as a queen. "You have heard what I had to say, sir!"

"But you were not in earnest, Winnie—I know you were not!"

"I am in earnest, Mr. Merriwell! Go to your eight or ten other girls! Surely you will be able to find one among them that is worthy. Go, sir!"

"But, Winnie——"

"It is useless to talk!"

Frank's manner suddenly changed.

"Oh, very well," he said, quietly; "I will go. It is all right. I see you do not care for me, anyway. I may find some one who does some time. I will not trouble you again, Miss Lee. If we never meet again as friends you will have no one but yourself to blame. I hope you may be happy. Good-evening."

He retreated to the door and bowed himself out. In the hall he found his hat and coat, and he lost no time in getting out of the house, as he knew how changeable girls are, and he felt that she might call him back at any moment.

He was right. Barely was he out of the house, when Winnie came rushing into the hall.

"Frank! Frank!" she called.

The door was closed, and she heard his step on the stone walk outside. Pressing her hands to her bosom, she listened till he could be heard no longer.

Then she fairly flew up the stairs to her room. She fastened the door behind her and flung herself on the bed, bursting into tears.

"Oh, I hate him—I hate him!" she cried. "I think he is the meanest fellow—just the very meanest! To

think that he could leave me like that! As if he didn't know I really did not mean all I was saying! Boys are such fools, anyway! He went away without making up—I do hate him—I do! I do!”

Then she lay there and sobbed as if her heart were breaking. At length her sobs grew less violent, and then finally died to a convulsive catching of the breath.

“Frank!” she whispered, “dear Frank! You are the noblest fellow in all the world! What other fellow would have done what you did for Evan Hartwick? Oh, no! I do not hate you, Frank—I do not hate you! What if you have had other girls? The girl who did not admire you would be a fool! I am a bad, mean girl, Frank! Won't you forgive me—won't you, please, Frank?”

And so, lying on the bed, having forgotten to undress, she fell asleep and dreamed of Frank Merriwell.

“How much like a girl that was!” thought Frank, as he hurried from the house. “She was unreasoning, and she expected to bring me to my knees before her. She hardly thought I would leave so suddenly. I am really sorry to pain the little girl, but she would have felt too sure of me if I had played into her hands as she anticipated. Now she will wish she had not commanded me to go, and the chances are ten to one

that I'll receive a letter from her to-morrow asking me to call."

Frank resolved that he would not call again till Winnie invited him. In this matter he would make her give in or he would remain away. He knew she would think all the more of him if he did so. He had not been to blame, and so his conscience did not smite him.

But he fell to thinking of what Winnie had said of other girls. Certainly there had been other girls whom he had admired—girls whom, in his boyish way, he had felt that he had loved.

He had not forgotten Inza Burrage—dark-eyed Inza, who had made such an impression on his boyish heart while he was a student at the military academy.

It seemed, however, that Inza had forgotten him, for she had ceased to write to him, and he had lost all trace of her.

There was another, however, of whom he thought even more tenderly than Inza. That other was Elsie Bellwood, the old sea captain's daughter—sweet, gentle little Elsie, with the sunny hair and trusting eyes.

In Frank's heart Elsie Bellwood had won a place unoccupied by any other girl. She was so trusting and clinging, so innocent and childlike, that he felt more like a big brother to her than anything else.

Elsie had been very dear to him. It had been his fortune to rescue her from many grave perils, and with her soft round arms clinging about his neck, her golden hair brushing his cheek, he had often felt that he could die for Elsie.

But Elsie was Inza's friend, and she had feared that she was doing wrong in caring for Frank. Inza had known Frank first, and she had been kind to Elsie. Elsie did not wish to betray her friend, and she had tried to forget Frank.

Fate, however, had flung them together several times. It had enabled Frank to aid in rescuing Elsie from a shipwreck, to save her from ruffians in the Florida Everglades, and to save her from a gorilla in the heart of an African forest.

How could Elsie conceal her love after all that? She found it impossible, and she found that Frank had cared very much for her from the first.

But the memory of Inza haunted her. She had resolved again and again that she would cease to correspond with Frank. Finally she had done so, and as she was on board ship with her father, it was not an easy thing for Frank to keep trace of her.

Thus it came about that Frank had heard nothing from Inza or Elsie in a very long time. It was natural that he should begin to believe that both girls had

ceased to care for him. All his letters remained unanswered, and he gave up writing.

Then came his friendship with Winnie Lee.

In many ways Winnie reminded Frank of both Inza and Elsie. She looked like Elsie and she had Inza's proud spirit and jealous nature. Inza had filled Frank with admiration, while Elsie had aroused his affections and sympathy by her gentle, clinging, trusting nature. Winnie seemed to have a touch of both characteristics.

In the morning after she had sent Frank away Winnie was filled with remorse and regret. She felt that she had seriously offended him, and she knew that she was in the wrong. It was not an easy thing for her to think of confessing as much, however.

Winnie was miserable. Two days passed, and her moods were strangely changeable. At times she would be all laughter and apparent lightness of spirit, but she was likely to be depressed and ready to burst into tears over the simplest matter a few moments later.

Girl-like, she told herself over and over that she was the most miserable person in the world. She vowed that she would never have another word to say to Frank—never! never! A few minutes later she would decide that she would drop him a note, asking him to call, and beg his pardon.

But would he call if she asked him? That question troubled her. She remembered his proud dignity as he took his departure, and she feared that matters could never again be the same between them.

She did write several notes, or begin to write them, but she was not satisfied with the wording of them, and she tore up one after another.

Finally, one day as she was out shopping she saw Frank at a distance. He did not see her, and she made no effort to meet him. But when she returned home she immediately sat down and wrote a brief note, asking him to call and stating that she had something to tell him.

"Please come," were her final words.

But that note was never mailed.

Each day Frank looked for a line from Winnie, and he wondered that none came. Was it possible that she had determined that all was ended between them? Was it possible that she was so spirited she would not be the first to make advances toward a reconciliation?

"If that is the case," said Frank, grimly, "I fear there will be no reconciliation."

Then he saw her pass in a carriage. She looked at him, and he was certain she was on the point of recognizing him, so he lifted his hat and smiled.

That smile froze on his face, for Winnie gave him a cold stare, as if he were an image of stone.

She had cut him!

That was altogether too much for Frank to endure without a feeling of resentment, and his teeth came together with a click.

"She is unjust!" he thought. "This settles everything!"

From that moment he tried to put Winnie Lee out of his mind, and he went at his studies and athletic exercises with redoubled energy. He was determined to be in the very finest physical condition for the spring matches. He was sure of the 'Varsity nine, and it was said that he would try for the crew. Frank did not say much about his intentions himself.

He had not the least idea that Evan Hartwick had struck him a blow, but such was the fact.

Then there were rumors that Merriwell's father bore a very bad reputation. It was said that he had deserted his family, that he was a gambler. It was even hinted that he was a convict.

Rattleton heard these rumors, and he was indignant. He denounced them as fabrications of the worst sort.

But when Rattleton was questioned as to what he knew about Merriwell's father, he was forced to confess that he knew very little. Frank had sometimes

spoken of his mother, but hardly ever, if ever, of his father.

Harry believed that Frank's enemies were working insidiously to injure him, but he could not seem to obtain proof to that effect. He did not like to speak to Frank of the matter, and thus it stood as spring came on.

Eunice Darley came on to New Haven, and she was often seen with Winnie Lee. Once Frank saw Eunice and Evan Hartwick together.

That was enough to make Frank feel rather resentful toward Eunice.

"She is like most girls," Merriwell thought. "Their friendship is of the most fickle sort. I believe she has cared for that fellow Hartwick all along."

Rattleton was watching Hartwick as a cat watches a mouse. He was determined to know if Hartwick was still working to injure Merriwell. This surveillance led him to arrive at the conclusion that Hartwick was again working to get into Winnie Lee's good graces through the influence of Eunice Darley.

"That fellow ought to be shot!" was Rattleton's mental comment. "I'll wager something that he is hanged some day!"

Harry was discerning enough to discover that Frank and Winnie were at outs, but he felt that was a point

on which he did not care to question Merriwell unless a particularly good opportunity occurred. Although he was Frank's roommate, he was impressed with a feeling of respect for Merriwell that would not allow him to become familiar on certain matters.

Merriwell kept so close to his studies and to his work in the gymnasium that he did not happen to meet Eunice. He sometimes wondered if she, also, would cut him if they happened to meet.

Then came the vacation before the spring term.

CHAPTER XX.

A RACE FOR LIFE.

When Frank returned to New Haven he resumed college life with a zest that was peculiar with him.

He had not forgotten Winnie Lee by any means, and he wondered if Eunice Darley was still in New Haven.

One afternoon he started to walk out toward Winnie's home. Something seemed to lead him in that direction.

He was walking along at a brisk pace, when there came a sudden rattle of wheels and clatter of hoofs. Then a runaway horse, dragging a carriage in which was a single occupant, dashed around a corner.

One glance showed Frank that the occupant of the carriage was a girl, and she had lost the reins.

As the horse came tearing around the corner the carriage was nearly overturned, but it did not quite upset.

With ears laid back, nostrils dilated, eyes filled with a mad fear, and foam flying from its open jaws, the animal came tearing along the street, dragging the rocking carriage.

If the horse was not stopped a catastrophe, possibly

a fatal accident, might occur—was almost certain to occur.

And the girl in the carriage? Frank caught a fair look at her face and recognized her.

It was Winnie Lee!

There was no time for meditation; it was a time for instant action.

Frank ran toward the center of the street to make an attempt to stop the runaway.

"I will save her!" was his determination.

There was no hesitation because of the danger to himself. There was not even a thought of danger.

He poised himself to make a spring for the horse's head and at the moment when he was about to leap he received a heavy blow on the back of the head that cast him prostrate before the frightened runaway!

Frank was stunned. The horse and carriage was right upon him and it seemed that he must be crushed beneath the horse's feet and the wheels.

Even though the boy had not been helpless to get out of the way there was no time for him to do so.

He had been struck down in a most cowardly manner just as he was on the point of attempting to save another human being at imminent peril of life and limb.

No human power could save Merriwell from injury at that moment.

But the horse had vaguely seen two figures rush out as if to block its path. It saw one of those figures drop and with a snort it sheered.

The girl in the carriage screamed. She believed that the wheels of the carriage passed over the prostrate figure and her horror was unutterable.

The carriage careened. It spun along on two wheels. It seemed bound to go over in one grand crash, but it righted.

The girl had clung fast with both hands. Otherwise she must have been flung out. As it was she barely held on.

Frank Merriwell lifted himself from the dirt. A figure was just vanishing around a corner and he obtained an indistinct glance of the fellow who had struck him down.

The horse was madly tearing down the street and the girl was still clinging fast in the carriage.

Frank's first impulse was to rush after the cowardly ruffian who had struck him and then he sprang up and staggered after the runaway.

"Winnie!" he hoarsely gasped. "She will be killed!"

The knowledge of her frightful peril drove all thoughts of himself from his head.

But he could do nothing to save her. His opportunity was past.

Was it?

At the next corner a saddled and bridled horse was hitched to an iron post, its owner having left it there a short time before. It showed its spirit by snorting and rearing as the runaway dashed past.

Frank saw that horse and new life came into his body like a flash. He dashed toward the horse, taking from his pocket a clasp knife as he ran.

His thumb touched a spring and the knife flew open.

The horse was reached just as the owner, attracted by the noise of the runaway, came running out of a shop.

With a single slash of the knife Frank cut the strap that held the horse. With a bound he was in the saddle.

"Hey, there! Stop it! Get off!"

The owner rushed toward Frank shouting and waving his hands.

"Go—git!" cried Merriwell as he dropped the knife and brought his hand down with a sharp slap upon the horse's rump.

The animal reared and pawed the air.

"You'll be killed!" shouted the owner. "Get off quick!"

Down came the horse's forward feet, away it shot like a rocket and the boy on its back sat there as if

glued to the saddle. Again his hand arose and fell sharply.

People were running along the street after the runaway, dogs were barking, and the sound of shouting voices could be heard.

But Frank heard none of these sounds. His eyes were fixed on that figure in the carriage ahead, his teeth were set and he was breathing a prayer that the catastrophe might be averted. A policeman ran out and tried to stop the runaway. He missed the bit and was struck by the wheels of the carriage. It was a brave attempt, but he was seriously injured, and he lay writhing in the street.

The policeman's unsuccessful effort had caused the runaway to sheer again and once more Frank's heart arose in his mouth, for he saw the carriage nearly go over.

"Heaven protect her! Heaven save her!" he murmured.

Then his hand rose and fell once more and he leaned far forward in the saddle crying in the ears of the horse he bestrode:

"On, good boy—fly! We must reach her in time! Everything depends on us now! Go, boy—go!"

And it seemed that the horse understood, for he responded with a burst of speed that was astonishing.

His iron-shod hoofs clattered over the stones from which sparks of fire flew now and then.

It was a thrilling spectacle for those who witnessed it—it was a race for life. They regarded the white-faced, determined-looking lad with wonder and admiration—they cheered him on.

“He will stop the runaway!” cried one.

“If he overtakes it before there is a smash-up,” said another.

A trolley car came clanging along a cross street. The motorman saw the oncoming runaway, turned pale, threw off the power, and applied the brake with all his strength.

A wheel of the carriage grazed the fender of the car as the runaway tore past.

Then came the beardless lad in pursuit, and it was plain that he saw nothing but the object he was pursuing.

“God help him!” gasped the motorman.

A heavy truck was crossing the street. The driver saw the runaway and turned his horses aside just in time to avert a crash.

All the while Frank Merriwell was drawing nearer and nearer, steadily gaining, and yet to the agonized lad it seemed that the horse he bestrode was creeping.

So many catastrophes had been narrowly escaped that it did not seem possible another could be averted.

How well Frank knew that trim figure in the carriage! Never had Winnie seemed dearer to him than at that moment.

"I will save you, my queen!" he murmured. "I must!"

He was close behind the carriage, the nose of his horse was at the rear wheel, and he gradually crept alongside.

"Cling fast, Winnie!" he called. "Hang on, and I will save you!"

He was sure of it now, and a feeling of exultation filled his heart. In a few moments more he would have the runaway by the bit, and then he felt that he would bring it to a halt.

And then, just as he stretched out his hand the mad animal attached to the carriage swerved against him with great violence and he reeled in the saddle!

"He's off!"

"The runaway has upset him!"

"Look! look!"

"Hurrah! hurrah!"

Although staggered, he had not been thrown from the saddle, as the excited spectators of the scene at first

thought. He recovered with an effort and again sent his mount along by the side of the other horse.

Then, swift and sure, he reached out and clutched the ring of the runaway's bit.

But it was not all over. The danger was not past.

The frightened animal had a hard mouth, and it was mad with fear. It did not seem to feel Frank at first, and then it madly tried to tear away.

A struggle royal ensued. Frank made the horse feel his strength, which was something remarkable for a youth of his years. Then he began to talk to both animals, holding his own horse in check by the touch of his left hand on the reins.

Frank felt a thrill of satisfaction over the way the animal he bestrode behaved, and he realized that the horse possessed unusual intelligence. It seemed to understand the words the boy was softly pouring into its ears.

"Steady boy—easy, easy! We are the masters here. Whoa, now! This is the way we do it, boy. Whoa! Good boy—noble boy! I'll own you, if it takes my last dollar!"

He talked to the other horse in the same calm way. His voice was soft and soothing—it was like music. The sound of his words gradually quelled the fears of

the crazed animal, and, little by little, he brought the runaway to a slower pace.

At length Frank forced the horse to a 'dead stand, still holding fast with a grip of iron to the bit, and still talking soothingly to the quivering, terrified beast.

Ready hands came to his assistance, and when he was sure the runaway was held by those competent of caring for him, he turned toward the carriage.

In the bottom, lying in a limp heap, was Winnie Lee, in a dead faint.

Excited persons were praising Frank for what he had done; were asking him a hundred questions, and were crowding about the carriage.

"Who is this girl?" demanded an officer, as he forced himself to the side of the carriage.

Frank was off the horse that had proved invaluable in the work of rescue, and he lifted Winnie from the carriage.

"Make room!" he commanded. "Where is the nearest drug store?"

It happened there was a store nearby, and thither he swiftly carried her. A doctor appeared, and Winnie was taken into the little office at the back of the store.

"Simply overcome by fright," said the doctor. "She will revive in a few moments, and I scarcely think there will be any serious result."

The doctor worked over Winnie, and she soon began to breathe gaspingly, the color came to her cheeks, her eyelids fluttered, and her eyes opened. She looked about in wonder.

"Why," she faintly exclaimed, "what has happened to me? Oh, I know! The dog frightened Dandy—he ran away!"

She turned faint again, but was given a little water, and fanned till she quite recovered.

"I thought I should be killed!" she murmured. "Then I saw Frank! I saw him struck down beneath Dandy's feet! Oh, it was terrible!"

She pressed her hands over her eyes, as if the picture was before her. Then she sat up, and, unmindful of those about her, stretched out one hand, speaking swiftly:

"But he was not killed! I next saw him at my side, mounted on a horse! He spoke to me! Then he got Dandy by the bit, and—and—I do not remember any more."

She looked around.

"He must have stopped Dandy," she said. "Where is he?"

"If you mean the young man who saved you, he was here a moment ago," said the druggist. "He must have stepped outside."

"Please send for him," said Winnie, with sudden calmness. "I must see him at once."

But when they went to look for Merriwell it was found that he had departed. He had even refused to give his name, but said that he must return the horse, with whose aid he effected the rescue, and had abruptly mounted and ridden away, having given the policeman the name and address of the young lady he had rescued.

"Most remarkable conduct," was the general comment.

Some one said the rescuer was a stranger in the city who was visiting there, and others declared he belonged there. One or two affirmed that he was a student.

When Winnie Lee was told that Frank had departed without waiting to hear her thanks, an expression of pain and regret came quickly to her face.

"He is so proud!" she thought. "He would not give me a chance to say a word. But I will see him and thank him, at least!"

The runaway was taken to its stable by an officer, and Winnie was carried home in the carriage of the physician who happened to be in the drug store.

CHAPTER XXI.

FRANK BUYS A HORSE.

Frank Merriwell had suddenly fled to escape the admiring stares and compliments of the crowd. He left the drug store to look after the horse he had borrowed without its owner's consent, and found himself immediately surrounded by a gaping throng. He heard excited persons telling of his wonderful deed, and he was stared at and questioned and crowded upon.

"By Jove! This is more than I can endure!" he thought, in dismay.

When he found himself beside the splendid horse with whose aid he had stopped the runaway, he gave an officer Winnie's name and address, and then, refusing to answer further questions, swung into the saddle, broke from the crowd, and galloped away.

"I don't suppose I ought to leave Winnie like this," he thought; "but she is safe now, and they will see that she gets home all right. I have done my duty."

Now that it was all over he remembered how he had been treated by Winnie, and his pride surged to the surface, surmounting his regard for the charming girl.

"She would feel called upon to thank me if I lin-

gered, and it might prove rather unpleasant for us both," he meditated. "I saved her. Perhaps she may realize that I have some pride left if I do not see her at once."

He thought he would send some flowers, and write a note expressing his hope that she was unharmed. In that manner he could do all that courtesy demanded of one in his position.

But when he came to meditate in that matter his spirit rebelled against it. He believed the flowers would seem like a supplication for forgiveness, and he had done nothing for which he sought forgiveness.

He finally decided that he would not even send the note, although it might be a breach of the natural laws of politeness.

She had seen him, and she knew who saved her. If she wished to thank him she might write.

Frank was riding along, thinking of this matter, when a voice hailed him:

"Hey, there, you! That horse—it is mine, young man!"

He looked up and saw a gentleman in riding suit and boots eagerly waving a whip at him from the curbing of the sidewalk.

Frank had seen the owner of the horse rush toward him from the shop, and, although he had obtained but

a glance at the moment, he recognized this as the same man.

The boy immediately reined the horse in toward the sidewalk and drew him up.

"Young man, how dared you do such a thing?" demanded the gentleman, severely. "Didn't you hear me command you to stop?"

"Yes, sir."

"But you did not stop."

"No, sir."

"Why not—why not, young man? You must have known it was my horse."

"I did."

"And you refused to obey me? Astonishing! Amazing!"

"The life of a young lady was in peril—a young lady whom I knew," explained Frank, with perfect calmness, although his nerves had not ceased to quiver and tingle after the exciting adventure through which he had just passed. "It was my duty to save her, and I believed I could do so with the aid of your horse. I had no time to ask leave to take your horse, sir. I presume you saw the runaway?"

"I did."

"Then you must understand my reasons for taking

your horse and paying no attention to your command to stop."

"Did you overtake the runaway?"

"I did, sir."

"And stopped it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good old Nemo!" cried the gentleman, patting the horse's sweat-stained neck. "The blood is there!"

Frank now began to observe the horse, and saw that it was a handsome bay gelding, with the marks of blood and breeding in every limb and outline.

Frank had dismounted, and was standing at the edge of the sidewalk. Up to that moment he had not been given an opportunity to survey and inspect the horse.

"My boy," said the man, turning to Frank, "you are the third person who has ever ridden this horse. The man who trained and broke him was first, I was next, and I have never allowed any other person to get upon Nemo's back. You could not have obtained permission to ride him."

"I understand," bowed the boy! "but I presume you now understand the urgency of the occasion, and I trust you will pardon me for what I did."

"As long as you overtook and stopped the runaway, I am compelled to pardon you. If you had failed I

should have felt like thrashing you within an inch of your life!"

Frank smiled.

"I am glad you have no occasion to try that," he said.

"It's all right, young man. You say you knew the girl?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who was she?"

"Miss Winifred Lee, daughter of Hon. Fairfax Lee."

"What? Indeed! I am well acquainted with Mr. Lee! And you saved his daughter with the aid of my horse? Well, sir, I am rather proud of the part my horse took in the affair."

"Now," said Frank, looking the man straight in the eyes, "I want to buy this horse of you."

"Buy him? I guess not! You do not know what you are saying, young man. This animal has racing blood in his veins and he has a pedigree. He is not for sale."

"I scarcely think there is anything in the world in the way of property that cannot be purchased at some price, sir."

"Oh, but this is no ordinary horse that is worth a

hundred or two hundred dollars. You have made a mistake."

"Possibly not. While I was in pursuit of the runaway I vowed I would own this horse, if I succeeded in accomplishing my object."

"Which was a very foolish vow. I am sorry to disappoint you."

"You have not disappointed me yet, sir. Although you may think a great deal of this horse, I think you would part with him if you could get enough money in exchange."

The gentleman smiled.

"Perhaps so, but I have never allowed Nemo to run, and, beyond his pedigree and my own estimation of him I have no idea of his real value. I have no doubt but I might ask several times what he is worth."

"Never mind that. Set a price, if you please."

The man hesitated and looked at Frank sharply.

"I'll set a price that will settle him," he thought. "I doubt his sincerity, anyway."

"Do you mean business?" he asked aloud.

"In asking you to set a price—yes," smiled Frank.

"Well, I will take one thousand dollars for Nemo."

"And I will take Nemo," said the boy, quietly producing a roll of bills. "Here is fifty dollars to bind the bargain for five days. If I do not appear with the re-

maining nine hundred and fifty before the expiration of that time the trade is off, and this fifty belongs to you. Kindly give me a receipt worded to that effect."

Frank went directly to his rooms, sat down and wrote to his guardian, Professor Scotch, and told what had happened that afternoon. He closed the letter with a request for one thousand dollars with which to pay for the horse.

When he had finished writing this letter and prepared it for mailing he suddenly thought of the ruffian who had struck him down in front of the runaway.

"I'll have to give that fellow my attention next," he muttered. "I obtained no more than a glimpse of him, but I know he was a young man. It was some enemy of mine. Miss Lee must have seen him, and she may be able to give me some information, for I propose to return with interest the blow he struck me!"

Frank's anger arose swiftly as he thought of the cowardly manner in which he had been struck down.

When Rattleton came in Merriwell told him of the adventure of the afternoon.

"That is simply tremendous!" cried Harry, excitedly. "But it is like you, Frank, to save her, after all!"

"It came out all right," said Frank; "but I want to

know the cowardly cur who struck me, Harry. I will give him blow for blow!"

"That's right, my boy! Do not let up on him! Baste him!"

"I will! I promise you that. Why, it was an attempt on my life! I might have been killed!"

"Of course, and I know who did it."

"You know?"

"As well as if I had seen him deliver the blow."

"You think it was Hartwick?"

"I am sure of it."

Frank was silent some moments, and then he said:

"I am inclined to believe you are right, although it was not a man who dressed like Hartwick, as I remember him from the glimpse I obtained. I do not know that I have another enemy in this city who would resort to such a desperate and cowardly trick. It seems like Hartwick. Still I have no proof as yet that it was that fellow. I shall look for proof."

"Proof?" spluttered Harry, excitedly. "While you are looking for proof he may get at you again and job the finish—I mean finish the job."

"He has not been very successful in his efforts against me thus far, and I do not think he ever will succeed. The one who struck me may have been a hired ruffian."

"Then Hartwick hired him."

"Very likely, but I must establish that fact."

"When you do you will let up on him, and he'll go off without punishment, as usual."

"Not this time, my boy. I have vowed to return blow for blow. I have endured as much from Hartwick as I can, and I shall show no mercy."

"Bravo, Frank!" cried Rattleton, as he caught his roommate's hand and wrung it. "Hang me if I don't believe you really mean it this time!"

"You'll find that I do. I bought a horse to-day, Harry."

"Eh? Wheejiz—no, jeewhiz! Bought a horse?"

"Yes, the horse with which I overtook the runaway. He is a handsome gelding, and the owner says he is of fine stock."

"Well, that is like you! How much did you pay for him?"

"One thousand dollars."

Rattleton dropped into a sitting posture as if he had been shot, and stared at Frank stupidly.

"Say—say," he spluttered. "If you don't kid your stopping—I mean stop your kidding——"

"I am not kidding, old man. I am in earnest."

Harry gasped.

"One thousand dollars!" came huskily from his lips.

"You were hum out of your ped—I mean plumb out of your head! The excitement must have broken you all up."

"That horse enabled me to save Winnie. The animal would be cheap to me at any price!"

"Ginger; but you are all broken up over that girl, Frank; that's plain. You've got it bad."

Frank flushed somewhat.

"Never mind," he said. "I don't think it will prove fatal."

"And I don't think Professor Scotch will cough a thousand dollars without investigating matters."

"He never refuses me anything, and I am sure I have taken pains to make my request in a manner that will cause him to hesitate about refusing this. I think he will cough the thousand, and do the kicking afterward."

"What will you do with the horse after you get it?"

"Keep it."

"Oh, this love!" chuckled Harry. "It is worse than neuralgia."

Frank went out and mailed his letter to Scotch.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN ASTOUNDING DEMAND.

"Hey?" roared Professor Scotch, readjusting his spectacles and glaring at the letter he had been reading. "What's this? what's this? One thousand dollars for a horse! The boy is crazy!"

Then he glared over the top of the letter at the open wood fire, as if it were some person he expected would contradict his assertion.

"Hum! ha! Ha! hum! I say the boy is crazy!" cried the little man, excitedly twisting his red whiskers. "He must be trying a practical joke on me. It will not work—no, sir! no, sir!"

It was a cool spring morning, and the professor had ordered an open fire built in the library. He had just eaten breakfast, and was now opening his morning mail, still in dressing-gown and slippers.

The very first letter the professor picked up was from Frank, much to his satisfaction, and he lost no time in opening it.

In a legal way the professor was Frank's guardian, but in nearly everything else Frank was his own master, and Scotch simply served as a figurehead.

There were times, however, when Scotch attempted to assert his authority in opposition to something Frank desired. It made no difference that such attempts always were failures. At certain intervals he came up smiling for renewed efforts to establish himself.

And now that Frank had called on him for a thousand dollars with which to purchase a horse, the professor fancied it was his opportunity.

"Preposterous! ridiculous! scandalous!" he spluttered, excitedly. "The boy says, 'Must have the money immediately.' Hum! ha! It is remarkable—most remarkable. Ha! hum! Why, confound him!" roared the professor, glaring at the letter, "he orders me to send a check at once on receipt of this!"

The little man sprang to his feet and pranced wildly up and down the big old-fashioned room, reading the letter as he hopped about, with his dressing-gown flopping about his legs and the tassels swishing about.

"Why, he says he must have the check before three o'clock to-morrow afternoon! Has deposited a sum as a forfeit. Will lose it if he does not receive check."

"Not a cent will he get!" thundered Scotch, kicking a chair out of his way—"not a single cent! Right here is where I show my nerve! I am his guardian, and he'll find it out! Yes, by the universe! he'll find it out!"

Then the professor stumbled over the very chair he had kicked aside a moment before, and a yell of pain came from his lips. He sat up, rubbing a bruised shin, and firing a few very warm remarks at the chair.

The door cautiously opened, and a black face and head, surmounted by kinky hair, appeared. The face wore an expression of alarm as if its owner was ready to run for his life at the least provocation.

"Fo' de Lawd's sakes, p'ofessor, what am de mat-tah?" asked the owner of the frightened face, the eyes staring and the thick lips blinking over the two rows of large white teeth. "Whar am de odder man, sah?"

"The other man?" howled the enraged professor. "What other man, you black blockhead?"

"Why, de man yo' wus a-fightin' wid, sah. I see he done knocked yo' ober, an' I heered yeh habbin' it awful wid dat man in heah. I was skeered ob mah life, but I believed it wus mah duty teh look in an' see if yo' wus kilt, p'ofessor. I'm a pusson what alwus tries teh do his duty, sah."

"Why, you charcoal-complexioned villain! if you had thought there was any danger, you would have made a rush to get out of the house!"

"No, sah!" and the woolly head was vigorously shaken in denial; "yo' 's shorely mistaken dar, sah. Didn' I tek car' ob yo', sah, dat time when yo' had done

tooken too much ob dat cordial med'cin what yo' gits do'n at de saloon—I means de apochumkerry's? An yo' wus a-seein' all dem runnin' an' crawlin' things, but I nevah wus skeered nor run ehway from 'em, sah."

"Get out, you black rascal!" roared Scotch, as he hurled one of his slippers at the head, which dodged from view, and the door was closed with a slam.

Open came the door, and back came the head.

"I'se gwine right away, sah, if yo' is suah dar is no dangah. I don' want tah leave yo' in dangah, p'ofessor. Yo' is dead suah dar ain't nobody done 'saulted yeh, sah?"

"Come in here!" commanded Scotch, as he got upon his feet. "Come in here!" he thundered, as the owner of the head hesitated.

"Whut's yo' gwine teh do, p'ofessor? Is yeh gwine ter hit me wid anything hard?"

"No, I am not going to hit you at all, Toots. Come in."

The door opened slowly, and a colored boy edged into the room. He left the door open so he could dodge out quickly.

"Close that door!" shouted the professor, fiercely. "What do you want to do—freeze me? Close it!"

The door was closed.

"Pick up that chair, Toots."

The boy obeyed.

"Now, sir, I want you to hear this letter—I want somebody to hear it, and you are the handiest person I can get hold of."

"Yes, sah."

Excitedly walking the floor, the professor began to read the letter. At intervals he would pause to glare at Toots and demand:

"What do you think of that, you scoundrel?"

"Well, sah," the darky finally said, "if yo' wants mah 'pinion, sah, I'se gwine teh tell yeh dat boy don' mek no mistakes. If he sais he wants a thousan' dollars fo' to buy a hawse, sah, I'd send it to him."

"And that shows just how much sense you have in that thick head!" roared the little man. "You fancy everything Frank does is right. I will not send it to him, and that settles it. Get out! Go!"

"All right, sah," grinned the boy, as he placed himself in the doorway. "But yo' bettah take mah advice an' done send dat money. Marser Frank's gwine teh be powerful mad if he don' get it. 'Spects he discharge yo' from bein' his guarddean."

"Discharge me! Why, confound your insolence, he cannot discharge me! You talk as if I were his servant. Get out, I tell you!"

"De p'ofessor's med'cine mus' hab disumgreed wid him dis mawnin'," muttered Toots, when he had closed the door. "I know whar he keeps dat med'cine, an' I'se gwine teh try it an' see what sort ob stuff it is. He! he! he! It won' be de firs' time."

After listening at the door and hearing Scotch muttering to himself within the room, Toots stole softly away.

Scotch was greatly troubled over the contents of that letter. He knew he would offend Frank if he refused to send the money, and yet it seemed a case of sheer folly to pay such a sum for a horse.

"Perhaps he don't want to buy a horse at all!" the professor suddenly exclaimed, as a thought struck him. "Perhaps he is in some sort of trouble, and he needs the money to get out of it."

The more he thought of this the more probable it seemed. He was thoroughly familiar with Merriwell's proclivity for getting into scrapes, and he finally decided that it must be that the boy had become entangled in some serious affair at Yale.

"And he did not want to let me know the truth," muttered Scotch, who was becoming anxious. "If I were to refuse to send him the money, it might mean disaster for him."

Thirty minutes later the professor rang for Toots, who soon appeared.

"Get out my brown suit! bring my boots! brush up my silk hat! pack my traveling bag!" shouted the professor, as soon as the darky appeared. "Don't lose any time about it! Do you hear?"

"Yes, sah; but fo' de Lawd's sakes, what yo' gwine teh do, p'ofessor?"

"I am going to take the noon train for Boston by way of Springfield, and I am going to wire Frank to meet me there."

"Well, I hopes yeh gwine teh tek dat thousan' dollars along. Is yeh gwine teh do dat, sah?"

"None of your business, you inquisitive black ape! Do what I told you, and be lively about it!"

"All right, sah, all right," grinned the colored boy; "but what I sais wus fo' yo' own good. What shall I put in yo' bag, sah?"

"Fresh linen, necktie, collars, my black suit—you know what I usually take."

"Yas, sah—gin?"

The professor made a move as if he would throw something at the darky, who dodged out of the room, chuckling as he did so.

"I know one thing yo' won' take," muttered Toots,

rather thickly, as he ascended the stairs to the professor's chamber. "Dat is de bottle ob cordial med'cine what yo' keeps on de sideboard. I've took de mos' ob dat mahself."

Toots had indeed sampled the professor's medicine rather freely, with the result that he felt "po'erful funny all ober," as he expressed it.

Within half an hour Scotch left the house and hurried away toward town, not having thought to order the carriage to take him there, as he was an extremely forgetful man.

In his hand he carried a large old-fashioned traveling bag, to which he had fondly clung for years, despite the ridicule it often excited.

Halfway to the town he thought of the carriage, and then he was so mad he came near turning back and taking it anyway, but he decided that he would not be able to catch the train if he did so, and he went on.

He had no time to spare in drawing some money from the local bank, sending a telegram to Frank, and catching the train for the East.

At last he was on his way, determined to know just why Frank wanted such a sum as one thousand dollars.

He had not felt like letting Frank know that he was coming on for that purpose, so he had dispatched that

he was on his way to Boston, and asked the youth to meet him in Springfield.

"If it is necessary, I'll find an excuse to go on to New Haven after I meet him," reasoned the professor, shrewdly.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PERSUADING THE PROFESSOR.

When Professor Scotch stepped off the train at Springfield that evening Frank Merriwell was on hand to meet him.

Rattleton and Diamond were with Frank, as he had induced them to take the run up to Springfield in his company.

"I'll wager he has brought them along to take me by storm," thought Scotch. "I'll be on my guard."

"Professor, this is a pleasure," declared Frank, as he wrung the hand of his guardian. "Permit me to present Mr. Diamond, of Virginia, a particular friend of mine. Jack, this is Professor Scotch, my tutor and guardian."

Jack shook hands with Scotch.

"You met Mr. Rattleton at the football game in New York, professor," said Frank. "I think you will remember him."

"Hum! ha!" coughed the little man, with gruff dignity. "I do remember Mr. Rattleton. He was behind me during the game. When you went through Princeton's line with the ball I found him seated astride

my shoulders and banging me over the head with a tin horn. He ruined my silk hat. I remember him very well."

"I pard your begon—I mean beg your pardon, professor," said Harry, quickly. "I was so excited I didn't know what I was doing, but I think you were the one who ruined the hat. When Frank made the touchdown you yanked it off and smashed a woman on the head with it. You were not satisfied to hit her once, but you continued to thump her with the hat, never minding that she was screaming blue murder, for you were shouting so loudly yourself that you could not hear her. You made a total wreck of her headgear, whatever it was!"

"Ha! hum!" came in confusion from the professor. "I think you are mistaken, young man, but there was so much excitement that a person could scarcely tell what he was doing. We will let that matter drop."

Then he turned to Frank, saying:

"I have but a very short time here in Springfield, for I am going right on to Boston. Very important business—very. I thought I'd like to see you and speak with you a few moments, so I sent the dispatch. I'm glad you came."

"And I am glad you came, professor. I presume you brought the money along?"

"Eh? Money? What money?"

"What money? Why, the money I wrote you about—the thousand dollars for that horse. You brought it?"

"Oh, no! I never carry so much money about me. Besides that, it is very ridiculous, Frank, very ridiculous, paying such a sum for a horse. If you want a nice little saddle pony, I'll send you one. It will be as good as you can ask for, and it will not cost over one-fifty or two hundred."

"But I do not want your nice little saddle pony, professor!" came sharply from Frank. "What I want is the horse I have bought. I wrote you I had made a deposit on that horse, and I should lose it if you did not forward the money at once."

"He! he!" laughed the professor, trying to playfully poke the lad in the ribs with his thumb. "I know you wrote that, but I am up to snuff. You didn't fool me."

Frank looked at the professor severely.

"What do you mean by that?" he asked, sharply.

"Oh, I know your jokes—I know 'em!" declared Scotch, attempting to be somewhat playful. "I can tell just when you are in earnest and when you are not."

"Professor, you are altogether too astute!" exclaimed Frank, holding in check his indignation, "I am astonished by your unusual display of sagacity."

"Hum! ha!" coughed the little man, attempting to straighten up and look dignified. "I have made human nature one of my chief studies. I am not very often deceived. Now I can tell exactly the character and peculiarities of your two friends here. Mr. Diamond is a very lively and jolly young man, full of jokes and pranks, but inclined to be somewhat timid and retiring. Rather than get into trouble, he would overlook any little offense or insult that might be put upon him by a stranger. Mr. Rattleton is exactly the reverse. He is grave and serious, but he is altogether too much of a fire-eater, and he——"

"You have said quite enough, professor, to fully convince the fellows that you think you know what you are talking about," said Frank, who could not wholly restrain a smile. "They now know just how accurately you can read character by the face."

"Ah, yes, yes! And they must understand how much better I understand your character, having had such a splendid opportunity to study it."

"Oh, yes, they understand it. But you have made a mistake in this case, professor. I want this money, and I must have it."

"Ho! ho!" laughed Scotch. "You keep up the joke well."

"It is no joke, sir," came sharply and convincingly from Frank's lips. "It is business, professor. I must have that money, and I must have it now."

"Eh? My gracious! Then you are in some kind of trouble?"

"No, I am not in trouble of any sort. I have told you the truth, and I want the money for the purpose stated."

"But, Frank——"

"There are no 'buts' about it! Where is the money?"

The professor took out his handkerchief and mopped his face. He tried to smile, but the attempt was a sickly failure. Instead of smiling, he looked frightened.

Rattleton drew back behind Diamond, and clasped a hand over his mouth to keep from laughing outright. The picture of would-be dignity and absolute consternation which the little man presented was really ludicrous.

"Jee! but Frank is bound to get that money!" Harry whispered in Diamond's ear. "He's a corker! Talk about Professor Scotch being his guardian! It gives me the he-hes!"

Diamond said nothing. He was interested in watching the way in which Frank brought Scotch around.

"Won't fuf-fuf-five hundred get you out of the fuf-fuf-fuf-fix?" stuttered the professor, in distress.

"No."

"It must be a bad scrape. I'll have to go down to New Haven and see what I can do to get you out."

"I tell you it is no scrape at all. My friends will tell you the same, now that you have seen fit to doubt my word. I want to buy a horse—I am going to buy a horse—I have bought the horse! You are going to give me the money to pay for it."

Frank spoke as if there were not a doubt in the world on that point.

"Hum! ha!" rumbled the little man, clearing his throat. "Business will have to wait. I am not going to Boston."

"No?"

"No, sir."

"Where are you going?"

"To New Haven."

"What for?"

"To see that horse. I am bound to take a look at the animal for which you are determined to pay such a preposterous sum as one thousand dollars. I will decide if it is worth that sum."

"It makes no difference whether the horse is worth

the money or not, I am going to buy him just the same."

"Crazy! crazy!" muttered the professor. "He must be working too hard. He may need a rest."

"All right," said Frank; "come along and see the horse. But you will have to furnish the stuff to buy him, no matter what you may think. I have set my heart on having that horse."

"There must be some cause for it."

"There is. The next train over the N. Y., N. H. & H. leaves in twenty minutes. Come into the waiting-room, professor, and I will show you a newspaper clipping that will reveal why I am so determined to have this horse."

Frank led the way, and they all entered the waiting-room. It happened that they went into the side for women.

"Here," said Frank, as they sat down in a corner, "here are some clippings you may read. They tell you how I rescued a young lady from peril by stopping a runaway horse, and——"

"That's the horse you want to buy, hey?" exploded the little man, in disgust. "It's just like you!"

"You are mistaken this time, professor. In order to stop the runaway, I was forced to pursue on another

horse, which I took without asking the owner's consent, and——"

"Didn't I say so! Didn't I know it! And you claimed you were not in trouble! He is going to force you to pay a thousand dollars for the horse, or have you arrested for stealing the animal! I see through the whole plot!"

"You think you do, but you are away off. When I was pursuing the runaway, I vowed that I would own the horse upon which I was mounted if the creature enabled me to overtake the other horse. I said I would own him if it took my last dollar to buy him."

"Boy like! boy like!"

"In the carriage attached to the runaway was a young lady whom I knew—a Miss Lee. We are very good friends, so——"

"Oh, that's it!" burst forth the professor. "It's another one! Will you never get over that?"

Frank flushed a little, a look of resentment coming to his face.

"I don't think I understand you," he said, severely. "I presume I have a right to become acquainted with a young lady in New Haven, if I choose?"

Rattleton punched Diamond in the ribs, grinning, but said nothing.

"Eh? Oh, yes—of course!" said the professor, has-

tily. "But you vowing to own the horse if you were able to save her, and all that. It looks suspicious."

"Well, read the clippings, and you will understand the situation better.

As the professor was reading, Rattleton touched Frank on the arm, saying:

"See that girl with the baby over there, old man. Rather pretty, eh?"

"A very pretty child," nodded Frank. "And it seems so good-natured. It does not cry at all."

"Hang the kid!" returned Rattleton. "I meant the girl that has charge of it. Seems to be a nurse girl, but she is a peach."

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN ENCOUNTER.

A man looked into the waiting-room. He was a young man, with a very black mustache and a square jaw. He was rather loudly dressed, carried a cane, and his silk hat was not set squarely on his head.

The moment this young man saw the girl with the baby he came in and walked straight toward her. There was a scowl on his face.

She arose in some agitation, with the baby in her arms. The little shaver crowed and laughed.

The man reached the side of the girl and grasped her arm, while he bent forward and said something to her in a low, hoarse tone. Both seemed to betray alarm. Apparently he was urging her to do something, and she was persistently refusing.

Frank was watching all this. His blood had been aroused a bit by the rude manner in which the fellow had grasped the girl's arm. .

The man seemed to grow more and more angry. His hoarse voice could be heard, but Frank did not catch the words.

At last the fellow caught hold of the girl again, and seemed to be threatening her with immediate violence.

That was more than Frank could endure. He sprang up and advanced on the two, quickly confronting the man.

"Sir," he said, distinctly and sharply, "you seem to be annoying this young lady."

The fellow turned on Frank with a growl.

"What's that to you if I am?" he snarled.

"I do not propose to see her annoyed," declared the boy, coolly. "Step back, and let her alone."

The man's anger increased.

"Take a tumble to yourself and git, or I will break your head!" he fiercely declared, glaring at Frank.

"You are at liberty to try that trick, sir; and if you do not leave this young lady, I will knock you down."

The man was fairly staggered. Such boldness from a youth was a stunner for him.

"Knock me down!" he gasped. "You? Why, I can break you in two, you insolent dog!"

"You think you can. It is a way with ruffians of your caliber."

"Ruffian! That settles it! I'll have to!"

The man aimed a vicious blow at Frank's head with the cane.

Like a flash the boy dodged, caught the cane, twisted

it from the man's grasp, took hold of both ends, broke it against his knee, and tossed the two pieces at the stranger's feet.

The man gasped with astonishment, and then his hand shot out to grasp Frank's shoulder.

Frank was equally swift in his movements, and the hand was knocked aside, while the lad sternly cried:

"If you try to repeat that trick I will do something besides break your cane, sir!"

Jack and Harry were on their feet, Jack was for interfering, but Harry held him in check, saying:

"Let Frank alone! He doesn't need any of our help, and he will not like it if we put our noses in."

"But that fellow is a man."

"So is Frank Merriwell. He may be a boy in years, but he is a man just the same. You know that."

Then both gave their attention to what was passing between Frank and the stranger, who was now furious.

"You meddling, insolent young brat!" grated the man. "You have broken my cane, and you will—take that!"

"That" was a blow sent straight at Frank's face, but Frank did not take it. He ducked to the right, and gave the fellow a trip and a push that sent him sprawling on the floor.

The girl cried out and hastened away with the child, plainly greatly alarmed by the encounter.

The stranger began to realize that it was no ordinary youngster who had so boldly faced him and got the best of the affair thus far.

Attracted by the struggle, some men hastened up, while the women in the room moved away in alarm.

An officer came bustling to the spot, ready to make arrests.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded the policeman. "Are you chaps looking for a night's lodging?"

"Arrest that boy!" cried the stranger—"arrest him and lock him up! I order you to do it!"

Now, no policeman likes to take orders from any one save those in authority over him, and the officer was not in any hurry about obeying.

"Why should I arrest him?" he demanded, regarding the man suspiciously. "Why shouldn't I arrest you both?"

"He assaulted me; he broke my cane! He threw me down!" excitedly declared the man, who had arisen to his feet and was glaring at Frank.

"Goodness! what is all this about?" gasped Professor Scotch, who had been so interested reading the clippings that he had heard nothing of the encounter.

"It's Frank—and he is in some kind of a scrape! Just like him! Never saw his match for getting into scrapes!"

The professor hastened to join the group.

"This man insulted a lady, officer, and I asked him to let her alone," said Frank, in a calm, convincing manner. "Then he struck at me with his cane, which I snatched from his hand and broke. He next tried to hit me with his fist, but I dodged the blow, and tripped him up. I did not strike him at all."

"It's a lie!" cried the stranger, who looked as if he longed to clutch Frank by the throat. "This boy tried to pick my pockets, and then I struck at him with my cane, which he broke. He then threw me down."

The officer looked doubtful.

"Why, you ought to eat the youngster!" he exclaimed, regarding the man with unconcealed contempt.

"I order you to arrest him!" snapped the man. "If you know your duty, you will do as I tell you!"

"Look here? I don't have to be told my duty by such as you! If you are not careful, I will lock you up!"

"That is right," said a portly gentleman, forcing his way into the knot of spectators. "You know me."

"Certainly, certainly, Judge Hughes," bowed the

policeman, in the most respectful manner. "Did you see what happened here?"

"I did, and this young man has told the truth in stating that the person there was annoying a girl, or young lady, who was in charge of a child. I was watching him all the time. It occurred just as the young man has stated. He simply protected the girl from annoyance or insult."

"That settles it!" exclaimed the policeman, turning squarely on the fellow who had tried to get him to arrest Frank.

"You get out of this now! Get a move on, or I will run you in immediately!"

"All right!" hissed the stranger, darting a vicious look at Merriwell. "I will go, but you have not finished with me, you young pup!"

"No threats!" growled the officer, as he made a move as if to grasp the man's shoulder.

The fellow lost no time in hurrying out of the waiting-room.

The crowd quickly dispersed, some hastening to catch a train.

"That must be our train, Frank," said Diamond. "We do not wish to stop in Springfield to-night."

Frank hastily thanked the gentleman who had been

addressed by the officer as Judge Hughes, and then turned to the professor.

"Come," he said, "we must go back on that train. What do you say?"

"Hum! ha! I am going with you," nodded Scotch. "Where is my traveling bag? We will get aboard at once."

Harry secured the professor's old-fashioned bag, and the three lads and Scotch hurried out and entered the train, which was bound south on its way to New York by New Haven.

"You are lucky that you are not lodged in a station house in this town to-night, young man," grumbled Scotch, with an attempt at severity, as Frank sat down by his side.

The back of a seat had been thrown over, so Jack and Harry were sitting facing them.

"Oh, I don't know about that," smiled Merriwell. "I couldn't sit still and see the girl annoyed by that big loafer with the cane and silk hat."

"Oh, no—of course not! You would have jumped right in if you had known it meant arrest for you! I never saw your match!"

"How could I help it? The poor girl was frightened and ready to cry. He was trying to force her to do something, the ruffian!"

The train started.

"There!" exclaimed the professor, "I breathe easier. I didn't know but we'd all be arrested."

"You are rather timid, professor," smiled Harry.

"Timid, sir—timid! You do not know me! I am courageous as a lion. You should have seen me hunting tigers in India and elephants in Ceylon. I astonished the natives by my daring, young man."

"And in New Orleans he made one of the most famous duelists of the South take water," laughed Frank.

"The gentleman could not have been from Kentucky," chuckled Harry. "He would have died rather than take anything but whiskey straight."

"Such persiflage is uncalled for, sir!" rumbled Scotch, severely. "I am very glad we escaped without further trouble with that ruffian, for such encounters are distasteful to me. I can quell a lion with my eye, but I do not care to deal with human brutes unless I am forced into it. By his threat, I thought it possible he might attempt to injure Frank before we boarded the train."

"Oh, that was all gas," declared Harry. "He wouldn't flirt a hie—I mean hurt a fly."

"He had a bad eye," said Diamond. "I believe he is an ugly customer."

"But we are not likely to see anything more of him,"

declared Frank. "I wonder who the girl was, and what became of her. He knew her, that was plain, and she was afraid of him. Well, we'll never see either of them again."

"That's where you are mistaken!" exclaimed Jack, suddenly. "The girl with the baby is in the fourth seat behind you, Frank!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DESERTED BABY.

Frank turned quickly, and, sure enough, there was the same girl, with the baby in her arms.

The child was sleeping, and the girl was holding it gently.

"You are right, Jack," said Frank, turning back. "That is the same baby."

"Baby!" softly exploded Harry. "Babies all look alike, but I know it is the same girl."

The girl seemed so absorbed with the child that she did not notice them at all.

After some speculation concerning her and the infant, Frank asked Scotch what he thought about the clippings he had read.

"Hum! ha!" coughed the little man. "I must acknowledge, Frank, that I am rather proud of you, but some time you will be killed doing these things. So you know the young lady? and you are determined to buy the horse that enabled you to save her?"

"That's it, professor."

"Well, the man who owns that horse is beating you. A thousand dollars! It is ridiculous!"

"He did not want to sell the animal at all, but I snapped him up so quickly that he could not back out."

"Oh, well, I'll have to see the horse."

"All right," said Frank, grimly, "and you will have to fork over the money. I am bound to have the animal."

The conductor came through the car looking for tickets. The boys were provided, but Scotch found it necessary to purchase a rebate.

"We are going to be hungry before New Haven is reached," said the professor.

"You may, but the rest of us will not," declared Frank. "We had a lunch before you arrived in Springfield."

"That's very nice!" observed Scotch, sarcastically. "Why didn't you wait for me?"

"Why, you dispatched that you were going straight through to Boston. I didn't suppose you would come along with us."

"Oh, it is all right! I won't starve."

Then the professor fell to asking Frank questions about his life at Yale, and they chatted for some time.

Of a sudden Frank started, uttering a low exclamation.

"Great Scott!" he muttered. "There is that fellow!"

A man came down the aisle of the car—the same man with whom Frank had had the encounter in the station at Springfield. He pretended he did not see the boy as he passed.

“That is the same fellow, sure as fate!” exclaimed Diamond, softly.

“Goodness me!” gurgled the professor, looking ready to collapse. “What a shock to my nerves.”

“You need a boda and sandy—I mean a soda and brandy,” said Harry.

Frank had turned around, and was watching the fellow, who had stopped at the seat where the girl was sitting. She shrank back, and looked up at him in fear.

“If he touches her, I’ll break his neck!” came fiercely from Merriwell’s lips as he partly arose from his seat.

The man said a few words to the girl, taking care that others should not hear him, and then passed on, leaving the car.

“By Jove!” said Diamond. “He is following you, Frank.”

“That’s right! that’s right!” came unsteadily from Scotch. “He is after you! We had better give him the slip by getting off the train the first time it stops.”

“And leave him to persecute that girl? Not much! I am not the one he is following. It is the girl.”

Frank got up, and walked back to the seat where the girl was sitting. He lifted his hat, and spoke politely.

"I trust you will pardon me," he said, "but I am the one who tried to save you from annoyance at the station in Springfield."

"I remember you," said the girl, and her voice was not quite steady. "I thank you, sir."

Then she turned away, as if she did not care to say more.

"I observed the same man on the train just now, and he spoke to you," said Merriwell. "I believe he is following you. I am ready to protect you from further annoyance."

She hesitated, and then turned toward him again.

"You are very kind," she murmured; "but I do not need to be protected. He will not harm me, thank you."

Again she turned away.

Frank was perplexed and somewhat chagrined. He returned to his companions, biting his lip as he resumed his seat.

"Ha! ha!" chuckled Rattleton. "She gave you the harble mart—I mean the marble heart."

"It is very peculiar," declared Frank. "I am cer-

tain she stands in absolute terror of that fellow, but she says she does not need protection."

They fell to chatting again as the train rolled along, and the girl and baby were forgotten till the child was heard crying. The girl soon succeeded in quieting it, however.

The cars were lighted long before Hartford was reached.

At Hartford the train stopped.

A few moments afterward, Frank looked around, and then said:

"Hello, the girl with the child is gone! She must have left the train here."

"Well, I hope that man left with her," muttered the professor.

Something led Frank to get up and walk back. As he was passing the seat that had been occupied by the girl, he uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

Neatly wrapped in a cloak, there lay the baby on the seat, fast asleep.

"Hello! hello! what is the meaning of this?" exclaimed Frank, as he bent over the child. "Can it be that she intentionally left the baby here?"

The little one awoke, looking up at Frank with a pair of wondering blue eyes, opened its mouth and laughed and crowed.

In another moment the lad had the infant in his arms.

"You cunning little rascal!" he cried. "You are just the sweetest little bunch of humanity I ever saw!"

The baby grasped his nose, as if it were a plaything.

"That's right!" chuckled Frank. "Take it right off and keep it! It is yours if you want it!"

"Goo! goo! goo!" gurgled the baby.

"Now I'd like to know who told you anything of the sort," said Merriwell, shaking his head. "I'm no goo-goo. Stop calling me names! You are getting familiar on short acquaintance."

"Gug-goo! gug-goo!" came from the baby.

"That sounds as if you were trying to say you love me. Well, I love you, too, you little shaver! I don't know which you are, but I'll bet a hundred dollars to a cent you'll make a football player when you get big enough. That's right! Now hit me in the other eye, and make them mates. Why, you're a pugilist!"

Rattleton came rushing down the aisle.

"Hello!" he gasped, his eyes staring. "What have you found, Merry?"

"A treasure," answered Frank. "Just look at it! Isn't it a beauty, old man? See it kick! See it laugh!"

Strong and so good-natured! Why, it's the handsomest baby I ever saw!"

"But where's the girl?" fluttered Harry. "What has become of her, Merry?"

"I haven't the least idea in the world."

"Well, this is a pretty scrape! You're in a fix! You've got a baby on your hands—I mean a baby on your hands. What are you going to do with it?"

"Do with it? I don't know."

"Well, wake up! Wheegiz—no, geewhiz! You don't want to be taking care of a baby. Let's do something!"

"What can we do?"

"Find out what became of that confounded girl! Somebody must have seen her get off."

By this time Diamond and the professor came down the aisle, and Scotch was greatly excited.

"It's a shame—a beastly shame to leave a child like that!" he roared. "The girl may have stepped off the car for something, but she had no right to leave the baby."

On making inquiries, a passenger was found who was sure he had seen the girl leave the train immediately on its arrival in Hartford.

"She may get left, and then what will happen to the

baby?" said Scotch. "Wait till I get my traveling bag. I don't want to lose that."

"What are you going to do?" asked Frank, when the professor had hurried to his seat and returned with the bag.

"Get off—get off and find that girl!" declared the little man. "I am going to reprimand her for her carelessness. It is inexcusable—utterly inexcusable."

He would not listen to anything the others had to say. The brakemen were heard calling, "All aboard!" and he urged the boys to hurry and get off.

They did so, and the train rolled out of the station, leaving them standing on the platform, staring about.

"Well, if this isn't a mitty press—I mean a pretty mess!" cried Harry, in disgust. "The train is gone, and here we are! We'll not get into New Haven to-night!"

"There are later trains," said Diamond.

"And we must find that girl for all of anything else," declared the professor. "She was left here, too."

"Left!" snorted Harry. "Why, it's a hundred to one she skipped and deserted the baby on purpose!"

"Eh!" gasped the professor, thunderstruck. "I never thought of that! What fools we are!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE UNFORTUNATE PROFESSOR.

They stared at each other in silence for some moments. As if it suddenly realized that some great catastrophe had befallen it, the baby began to cry.

"Here, take my traveling bag!" roared the professor, excitedly. "Let me have that child! Boys don't know how to handle babies! Give it to me!"

The man's fierce manner, his hoarse voice, and his bristling red whiskers seemed to frighten the infant, and make it cry all the more.

One of the employees about the station came along and glared at Scotch. Then a big man blustered up and down past the group a few times, finally whirling ponderously on the dazed boys and the professor, to sharply cry:

"That baby is hungry! It's starving! Why don't you take it to its mother, man? What sort of a father, are you, anyway?"

"Father!" gurgled the professor, nearly losing his breath. "This is too much! Somebody else take the child quick!"

"Oh, no!" said Frank, winking at the others. "Boys do not know how to handle babies."

"Of course not," agreed Harry. "And the poor little thing is much better off with its papa."

"It would be better off with its mother!" snapped the stranger. "Some fathers are not fit to have children."

"Oh, merciful goodness!" groaned Scotch. "What a scrape! What an awful scrape!"

"What's the matter?" asked the stranger. "Has your wife run away and left you? Some women are not to blame for leaving their husbands."

He said this in the most pointed manner possible.

"Sir! sir!" roared Scotch, his beard bristling and his face getting purple. "You are meddling with something that is none of your business!"

"It is any man's business to see that a helpless child is not abused," returned the stranger, glaring at Scotch. "I should say your wife showed her sense in leaving you, but she was cruel to her child to leave it in the hands of such a man. I'll wager something that you did not properly provide for her, and you look to me like a wife-beater."

Frank was convulsed with silent laughter, and Harry was forced to hold his hand over his mouth to keep back an outburst. Jack was smiling despite himself.

"You meddlesome numskull!" shouted Scotch, who was beside himself with wrath. "I am not a married man! You wouldn't dare make such talk to me if I didn't have this child in my arms! I'd—I'd——"

"What would you do?"

"I'd have you arrested."

"We'd better get out of this, Frank," said Jack. "A crowd is beginning to gather. We are liable to get into trouble."

Merriwell saw this was right, and so he got hold of the professor's arm and dragged him away, saying:

"Come on; we'll try to find its mother."

"That's right!" snorted the big man—"that's right! and I hope she'll have the old duffer juggled, as he ought to be!"

The boys got the professor away, and they went inside the station, where a "council" was held.

"What are we going to do with this child?" asked Harry, soberly.

"Why, turn it over to the authorities, of course," advised Diamond.

"I presume that will be the proper way," agreed Frank.

"Never!" exploded Scotch, who had been aroused till he was in an unreasonable mood. "There is no telling what sort of treatment the poor thing would

receive. Here, Frank, you take it again, and see if you can make it shut up."

Frank again took the child, and was soon able to quiet it somewhat, although it did not seem fully satisfied.

"If we do not do something, we are liable to all get into trouble," said Jack, observing they were still watched by a number of wondering persons.

"What shall we do?" asked Harry, helplessly.

"Take the child to a hotel, where we can care for it," said the professor. "Then we will find that girl. Now not a word. I know what I am about. I know how children are treated who are turned over to the authorities, and I know what a lot of troublesome questions are asked. It is the best way. Go out and get a cab, Frank. Do as I tell you, or you'll never get hold of that thousand dollars. Be quick, too!"

Frank instantly decided that it would be a good plan to get away from the station. The authorities could be informed after they had gone to a hotel.

Taking Harry with him, and leaving Jack to watch the professor and care for the child, Frank went out.

"This is a beastly joke!" chuckled Harry, who seemed to enjoy it. "Think of Professor Scotch being taken for the baby's father."

"He'll never get over it!" laughed Frank. "I'll have a horse on him as long as I want to spring it."

"You'll have a horse on him all right," declared Rattleton, "for you can make him fork over the thousand now."

"That's right. Now you look around and see if that girl is about. I don't imagine you will find her, but it won't do any harm to look. In the meantime, I'll engage a cab."

Harry did not find the girl. She had utterly disappeared.

Frank secured a cab, and then returned to the professor and Jack. The child was crying again, and the little man was making frantic efforts to soothe it. The more he bobbed about and made up faces the more it cried.

They all hustled out to the cab, and, as they got in, the professor cried:

"Take us to the nearest hotel, driver."

"I have given him directions," said Frank.

"I don't care if you have!" roared the excited little man. "Do as I say, driver! Take us to the nearest hotel!"

Away they rattled, and they were soon at a hotel, where the cabman was paid and dismissed.

"You take the baby in," said Frank, thrusting it on the professor. "It will look better if you have it."

"It may save troublesome questions," observed Harry.

Scotch grumbled, but he could not drop the child, and so he followed the lads into the office of the hotel.

Frank called for two connecting rooms, and the clerk said he could provide them. Then they registered, while the baby again began to squall.

The clerk scowled at the professor, and the guests and others who were in the office when the party entered looked on with wonder.

"Here, take it—take it while I register!" spluttered Scotch, again thrusting the child on Frank.

"Are you with these young gentlemen?" asked the clerk.

"Yes, sir, I am!" shot back Scotch.

"Your—ah—your wife—if she comes, you'll want a disconnected room."

"My wife! Why, I——"

"She will not come to-night," said Frank, quickly, realizing the professor was about to deny that he had a wife, which might bring about some unpleasant inquiries concerning the baby. "It is all right. We will go right up on the elevator."

"No elevator," said the clerk. "Six dollars in ad-

vance for the rooms. A matter of precautions, as you have no trunks."

"Well, what sort of a joint is this?" muttered Harry.

Frank hesitated. He thought of going to another hotel, and then he knew that would mean more trouble, so he paid for the rooms. The clerk rang a bell, and a boy took the professor's traveling bag.

"This way, gemmans, this way," said the boy, who was black as the ace of spades, and who grinned like a hyena.

They followed him up the stairs—one, two, three, four flights.

"Murder!" puffed Scotch, when the rooms were finally reached. "This is a fine hotel! Four flights—no elevator!"

"Six dollars for the rooms!" murmured Frank, as he looked around at the wretched accommodations.

"Yeh might hab got on de top, gemmans," said the colored boy. "Dat's up anodder flight. You kin change if yeh wants teh."

"Wow!" gasped Harry. "This is bad enough! Let's take no chances by changing!"

"All right, gemmans. If yeh wants me, jes' ring. Bring yeh anything yeh wants. Bar closes at one o'clock."

"If we want you we'll ring!" roared the professor.
"Get out!"

Frank gave the boy a piece of money, and he went out, pausing in the door as the baby gave a howl to remark:

"Lordy! but dat chile's got a voice jes' lek his father's."

Then he closed the door, and they could hear him laughing as he departed.

"Taken for a father again!" groaned Scotch, as he dropped on a chair. "If this thing continues, I'm bound to commit a crime!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

LULLABY.

To Frank and Harry the whole affair was a huge joke. Jack looked at it more seriously, while the professor was suffering tortures. He mopped his face with his handkerchief, and then he tore open his traveling bag, and began to dig out its contents in a mad hurry.

"I must have something to steady my nerves!" he roared. "If that infernal nigger didn't pack my bottle of cordial I'll flay him when I return!"

"I should say he had packed something," said Harry, "judging by the powerful odor that comes from the bag."

"What's this?" howled Scotch, as he held up a pair of overalls and glared at them. "Why, these are what I wear when I dig in the garden, which I sometimes do for amusement. What are these?" he shouted, ripping out a pair of dirt-covered boots. "These are the boots I wear when I dig in the garden. I told him to pack my black suit. Here's the vest, but that's all! I'll have that nigger's life! He must have been crazy! Never knew him to do a thing like that before. Here's

my bottle of cordial! It's smashed—it's all over everything! That's what you smell. Wow! Whoop! Nothing to steady my nerves! I'll go crazy!"

He sat on the floor in the midst of a mess of things he had torn from the bag, looking the picture of despair.

It was a ludicrous spectacle, and both Frank and Harry shouted with laughter.

"Laugh!" exploded Scotch. "Laugh, you thoughtless young villains! There's nothing to laugh at! This is a tragedy!"

"Remember the bar keeps open until one o'clock, professor," said Frank.

"That's all that will save me now!" declared the man. "I am driven to it as a last resort. I am against liquor—I believe in putting it down."

"That's right," nodded Frank, "and he does."

Scotch rang for the boy, who appeared swiftly, as if he had been awaiting a call.

"Well, sah, what de gemmans have?" he grinned.

"I want something to steady my nerves," explained the professor. "They are completely shattered."

"Bring up the bar," chuckled Harry.

Scotch finally ordered gin, and the boy disappeared.

Frank had quieted the baby somewhat by giving it

a silver quarter to play with. The baby tried to swallow the quarter, and Frank barely prevented it.

"Why didn't you let it go?" asked Harry. "Then you could have let the kid out with a circus."

"How?"

"Oh, anyhow. There would have been money in the little fellow."

"How can you jest?" groaned the professor. "This is a sad and solemn occasion."

"That is jest so," agreed Frank. "But Harry said something to me at dinner to-day that made me feel even sadder than I do at this minute. I found a hair in some honey I was eating, and I called his attention to it. 'How do you suppose it got there?' I asked. 'It must have come from the comb,' he answered. And I fainted."

The baby laughed.

"You little rascal!" cried Frank. "If you will laugh at a thing like that I fear for your future. You will be utterly without feeling when you grow up to be a man."

"How do you know it will grow up to be a man, Frank?" asked Harry.

"No girl ever would have laughed at a chestnut of that sort."

The boy appeared with the gin for the professor, who

seized the glass with a trembling hand and swallowed its contents at a gulp. Then the boy was paid, and took his departure.

The baby grew restless again. It fussed and cried.

"Why don't you keep it still, Frank?" impatiently demanded Scotch.

"Hold your breath about ten minutes, and I will."

"Jeewhiz!" chuckled Harry. "How can he hold his breath ten minutes? It's too strong."

"That baby's sick," declared Jack. "It needs a doctor. Shall I go for one?"

"No! no! no!" shouted the professor. "How do we know anything about the doctors around here? The average doctor can't cure a ham!"

"Well, what is to be done?" asked Diamond, in perplexity.

"The baby needs amusement," asserted the professor. "They always require amusement. Go out and buy him something."

"What shall we buy him?"

"Oh, buy him a brick block, and bring it right in here!" roared Scotch, sarcastically. "You know that's just what a baby wants to play with! Buy him a hearse! That will be something funny! Buy him a steam yacht! That yacht to be all right!"

And then, when the professor realized what he had

said, he reeled and fell against the wall. The pun had been quite unintentional, but it had come out in his hurry to say something.

Frank and Harry were convulsed again. The situation seemed to grow more and more ludicrous.

The baby gave a wild squall that served to cause the professor to straighten up as if he was worked by wires.

"Go out and get that child something to play with!" he thundered. "Buy him anything you see! I'll pay."

"Come on, Harry," said Jack. "Let's see what we can find?"

"Get a rattle, a doll—anything!" directed Scotch.

They had got outside when he rushed to the door, tore it open, and howled after them:

"Don't forget to buy a bottle of Mrs. Dinslow's swindling syrup."

When they reached the office the clerk looked at them rather closely. Feeling full of mischief Harry remarked to Jack, speaking loudly, for the clerk to hear:

"I don't think Professor Scotch makes a very gentle father. I am sure that, now the child is on his hands, he would like to get rid of it. We must watch to see that he does not dispose of it. You know what I mean—you know."

Jack was somewhat puzzled by Harry's peculiar manner and words, but Rattleton had accomplished his purpose. The suspicions of the clerk were thoroughly aroused. One of the guests who had seen the party enter the hotel also overheard Harry's remark. When the boys went out he rushed up to the desk and excitedly said:

"I knew there was something wrong about that old fellow! He is a savage old pirate! He is not fit to care for a child! The mother has deserted him, and left the baby. It's ten to one he will murder it! You do not want anything of the kind to happen in this house."

"I'll look after that man a little," said the clerk. "I may have to warn him to be careful."

Jack and Harry returned with a number of toys and a bottle of some kind of soothing syrup. To their surprise they found the baby was quiet. Frank was holding it in his arms, and singing lullaby songs to it in a soft, musical voice. He had tipped a chair on its back legs, and was rocking forward and backward with it in that manner.

"How did you accomplish it?" asked Jack, wonderingly.

Frank smiled mysteriously.

"Oh, I looked after it properly," he said.

"O-o-oh!" exclaimed both Jack and Harry.

Then Frank went on with his song:

"Sweetly slumber, little baby,
Close your eyes;
Angels now their lamps have lighted
In the skies.
Safe you are with me, my baby,
Through the night,
Till another day shall bring you
Sunshine bright."

It really made a very pretty picture, and all thoughts of joking and ridicule were banished from the on-looking lads. It brought to mind the old home and the mother who had sung lullaby songs. It caused them to wonder where the mother of the poor little waif of the train could be, and if she were longing for her baby that night. Perhaps its mother was dead. Perhaps it had never heard her voice singing it gently to sleep. Perhaps never again would it feel the touch of her lips sealing its drooping eyelids with that gentlest, sweetest and tenderest of all things in the world — a mother's kiss!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MORE TROUBLE.

Professor Scotch was in the adjoining room, the door of which was standing open. The boys went in and showed him what they had purchased for the baby.

"That's all right," he said, gruffly; "but Frank's getting along first rate with that infant. It's remarkable what things that boy can do! He'll handle anything from a mad horse to a baby. Hum! ha! Ha! hum! Wonderful boy—wonderful!"

They talked in low tones with the professor, hearing Frank's voice sink lower and lower, till he finally ceased to sing.

After some moments Jack stole softly to the door and looked into the other room. What he saw caused him to catch his breath.

The baby was asleep on the bed, and close beside the bed Frank Merriwell was kneeling, his head bowed.

Jack Diamond felt his heart swell in his bosom, felt it go out to the boy by the bedside, and he realized there was a side to Merriwell's nature not exposed to general view. Jack Diamond, who had fancied he hated Frank when they first entered college, now

knew that he loved and respected Merriwell more than any lad he had ever met. He would fight for him, go through fire and water for him, do anything for him.

Jack tiptoed back from the door.

"What is Merry doing?" laughed Harry. "Is he doing the right thing with the kid?"

"Yes, he is doing the right thing," answered Diamond, soberly.

"Oh, he's a wonder!" declared the professor. "But I am hungry. I'm going down and get something to eat. Stomach requires it. Got to have it, you know.

"What's that your stomach requires, professor?" asked Frank, entering the room, a smile on his face. "Be careful, sir. You know your weakness."

"Oh, get out!" cried Scotch, jumping up. "You're always fooling and joking! I don't believe you ever had a serious thought in your life."

He got his hat, being cautioned by Frank not to awaken the sleeping infant, and hurried out.

The boys sat and talked over the situation in the room adjoining the one in which the child lay.

"This is a scrape!" laughed Frank. "Just think of it! We'll not be on hand when the chapel bell rings in the morning."

"And we will have to make explanations," said Jack. "It is going to be rather awkward."

"It's all because of that hattle-reded—I mean that rattle-headed old professor!" cried Harry. "He had to drag us off the train, and then he wouldn't let us turn the baby over to the authorities. What in the world does he think he is going to do with it?"

"He'll have to notify the authorities in the morning," said Jack.

"That's right," nodded Frank. "He'll be glad to by that time. We'll make him believe he'll have to take sole charge of the baby if he does not, and that will bring him to time."

"This is a most remarkable affair," came soberly from Jack. "Do you suppose that girl could have been the baby's mother?"

"No. She was rather plainly dressed, although her clothes were not poor; but the garments of the baby are of the very finest material. The baby's parents must be wealthy. The girl was a nurse."

"But why she skipped out and abandoned the kid is more than I can understand," said Harry.

"Don't you suppose that fellow in the silk hat, who seemed to be following her, had something to do with it?" asked Jack.

Frank nodded.

"I am inclined to think so. She was afraid of him; but where she was taking the baby and why she deserted it is more than we know at present."

"Well, we'll have what fun we can out of it while it lasts," chuckled Harry. "The professor is as good as a circus."

"I hope he will keep away from the bar," said Frank. "Perhaps one of us should have gone down and watched him."

They talked about half an hour and then the door burst open, and Scotch came staggering into the room. He was a most astonishing spectacle. There was blood on his nose, his collar was torn open, his coat was ripped up the back, and his hat was smashed.

Scotch dropped into a chair, gasping for breath.

"What's this?" cried Frank.

"Wheegiz!" gasped Harry.

"He's hurt!" exclaimed Jack.

"What have you been doing?" demanded Merriwell.

"Why, you are all torn to pieces!"

"You ought to see the other man!" hoarsely gurgled Scotch.

"The other man? Then you have been fighting? Why, professor, I never thought this of you!"

"I never thought it of myself," acknowledged Scotch; "but I couldn't help it. He followed me up,

and kept insulting me. I was taking a little something at the bar to steady my nerves. He stood right up beside me and advised the barkeeper not to let me have anything. Said I had turned my wife out of doors and was plotting to get rid of my child! Said I had the face of a man who would not hesitate at any crime! Think of it! Whoop! Said I was sure to be hanged, and he would like to be present when the event occurred! Wow! Think of that, too! Called me a little two-cent parody on a man! Ye-e-eow! Said the sap of natural decency had turned to bitter gall within me and poisoned my withered soul till it was a fiend that would frighten the worst devil in the infernal regions! Yar-r-rh! Think of that!"

Rattleton nearly had a fit, and Frank quickly closed the door of the next room, so the professor's hoarse voice might not awaken the sleeping baby.

"The man must have been drunk," said Diamond.

"Oh, my! Oh, my!" gasped Harry, holding onto his sides. "That man was looking for trouble, sure."

"Well, he found it!" snarled the professor.

"What did you do?"

"Do? Why I shook my fist right at him! I was awful mad!"

"Is that all you did?"

"I didn't have time to do much of anything else. He

jumped at me, and then we had it. It was an awful fight—simply awful!”

“Did you hit him?”

“I don’t know; I don’t remember. But I know I threw him down on the floor at last, and I got under him and held him there. I wouldn’t let him get up.”

Harry slapped Frank on the back in an ecstasy of mirth.

“Threw him down and got under him!” gasped Rat-leton. “Then held him that way, and wouldn’t let him get up! Ha! ha! ha! This is rich!”

“Well, I’d like to know what you see about it that is so funny!” thundered the professor. “If I had returned in a dying condition I presume you boys would have laughed like jackasses! And it all comes from that infernal baby! That baby is getting me into more trouble than I ever struck before in all my life!”

“Then we had better notify the authorities, and let them care for it,” said Jack.

“No—I say no!” shouted the professor. “I am going to look after that infant till it is returned to its parents! I’ll do it if it costs me my life, and it begins to look as if it might,” he concluded, with a dismal groan.

“Well, professor, the best thing we can all do now is to go to bed,” said Frank. “Take some water and

wash the blood from your face, and then we will turn in."

"If there were an elevator I'd go down and have it out with that man," grated the professor; "but I am too tired to walk up those stairs again, and so he escapes with his life. I'd held him down till he said he had enough if some fool hadn't come and pulled him off."

After a time the professor was induced to undress. He looked at his torn clothes in horror and dismay.

"What am I going to do?" he groaned. "That confounded nigger did not pack anything but the vest of my other suit! I'll be a pretty-looking object."

He laid his clothes over the back of a chair near the door. By some chance Toots had packed a nightdress, and this the professor put on.

After he got into bed he talked about getting up and going down to see that man again, but Frank knew well enough that Scotch would be liable to run for his life if he accidentally encountered the man.

"Don't you think this joke is getting rather serious?" asked Jack, as the professor began to snore.

Frank and Harry laughed again.

"It certainly is the greatest racket I ever heard of," declared Frank. "Won't we have a yarn for the fellows when we get back to college!"

"Geewhiskers!" chuckled Harry. "They'll nearly laugh dying—I mean die laughing."

Jack did not seem to regard the matter in quite the same light as did his companions. He was uneasy, and he felt that they had made a big mistake in not notifying the authorities for all of the professor.

At last the boys decided to turn in. It was settled that Frank should sleep with the baby, while Jack and Harry would manage to get along in the same bed with the professor.

"Hear him snore!" exclaimed Diamond. "I'll not sleep a wink."

"We'll get a clothespin and put on his nose," grinned Harry.

The boys went to bed, and Frank finally fell asleep.

It was not very long after that that the baby awoke them all by crying lustily. In vain Frank tried to soothe it. It seemed desperate, and it cried louder and louder. All the boys got up, and finally Scotch came tearing into the room in his nightdress, also aroused by the infant's cries.

The boys had partly dressed, and all were wondering what could ail the infant to make it howl so loudly.

"Amuse it! amuse it!" roared Scotch. "Where are the things you bought for it? Here, Frank, it's tired

of you at last. Let me have it! There, there, there! Shut up, or you'll lose your wind entirely!"

Scotch took the baby from Frank and bounced it up and down, but it continued to cry.

"Amuse it! amuse it!" he commanded again. "Hurry up, before it raises the roof!"

Harry got the doll, and tried to attract the baby's attention, but the infant closed its eyes and howled still louder, if such a thing could be.

Frank got the rattle and, in great excitement, Jack went for the soothing syrup. But still the baby howled.

"For goodness' sake do something quick to stop his squalling," roared the professor, great beads of cold perspiration starting out on his face.

Then came a heavy rap on the door.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE INFURIATED GUESTS.

Frank went to the door and opened it.

A man in pajamas was outside.

At a glance Frank saw the doors of other rooms were open, and he caught a glimpse of one or two heads thrust out at the openings.

Evidently the baby had aroused the whole floor at least.

"Why don't you stop that baby's noise?" raspingly demanded the man at the door. "It is keeping everybody in the hotel awake! It is a nuisance! If it is not stopped immediately I shall go down to the office and complain."

Frank was hot.

"Just you go back to your room and mind your own business, or you may be helped down a flight," he declared.

"What's that, boy?" cried the man, in astonishment. "Why, you are a stripling! You couldn't harm a flea! But you need to be taught a lesson, and I think I will teach it to you."

He caught hold of Frank, and tried to give the lad

a shaking. Then he met with one of the greatest surprises of his life.

Merriwell wrenched out of the man's grasp, dodged behind him, caught him by the neck and a handy portion of his pajamas, and ran him to the head of the flight of stairs.

"How is this for a stripling who can't harm a flea?" inquired Frank, as he aided the man downstairs with his foot.

Bump-ety-thump - bump - thump - chug! — the man landed at the foot of the first flight of stairs.

Frank coolly strolled back to the room, where the baby was still howling.

The professor was wildly dancing about, with the child in his arms, trying to quiet it.

"What's the trouble, Frank?" asked Harry.

"Oh, nothing!" was the nonchalant reply. "There was a man outside who threatened to go down to the office and complain about the baby, and I helped him descend the first flight."

"What can we do to quiet the child?" asked Jack, anxiously.

"There must be something the matter with it," said Harry.

"Of course there's something the matter with it!"

shouted the professor. "There's a pin sticking into it somewhere! Look for that pin, Frank—quick!"

Frank looked, but did not find a pin that was troubling the infant.

"It can't be that," he declared. "It is something else."

"The poor little thing wants its mamma," said Jack.

"Well, I wish its mother had it!" roared Scotch, stopping his ears with his fingers, and dancing up and down in excitement. "Cæsar's ghost, but this is awful!"

Suddenly Frank clinched his fist and struck himself fiercely in the neck, as if a sudden idea had occurred to him.

"What is it?" asked Jack and Harry, in unison.

"I have it!"

"You have?"

"Sure. I know what ails the baby! We're all fools!"

"Well, what ails the baby? Tell us quick!"

"It's hungry!"

The three lads and the professor stared at each other in the greatest disgust, while the child still cried.

"I should say we are fools!" cried Jack. "Why, the baby's starving! We haven't given it a thing to eat!"

Bang! Open came the door, which Frank had failed to lock. Into the room strode the man in pajamas. Behind him were several other guests of the hotel, all partly dressed, and all armed with weapons ranging from a whisk broom to a huge revolver, the latter being in the possession of a little man who looked as if he was in mortal terror that it would go off. Outside the door, at a distance, one or two pale-faced, frightened-looking women could be seen.

"Ha!" cried the man in pajamas, fiercely. "We have heard you!"

"Yes, and we know all about you," declared a man with a hatchet, which he flourished as if it were a tomahawk.

"So that old ruffian is trying to starve the child to death!" grumbled a huge, red-faced man, pointing an accusing finger at the professor.

Scotch dodged behind Jack, trembling and gasping:

"It—it's the ruffian who assaulted me down at the bar! Don't let him come near me! I shall hurt him if he does!"

"We are here to see that the infant is given a square deal," put in a man with a shovel, which he held ready for action.

"Jest so! jest so!" squeaked the man with the re-

volver, and then he jumped aside and held the weapon at arm's length, as if it had tried to hit him.

"I am for having that inhuman monster of a father arrested and jailed!" came hoarsely from the red-faced man.

"It would serve him right!" agreed all the others, and they glared at Scotch as if they longed to annihilate him.

The professor was weak in the knees and forced to cling to Jack in order to keep from wilting on the spot.

"Oh, what a dreadful scrape we are in!" he dismally groaned.

"All on account of keeping the infant, when we should have turned it over to the authorities," said Diamond.

"Professor, you must give them a full explanation," declared Harry.

"If I could get to the bar I would get full enough to give them any kind of an explanation!" groaned Scotch.

"Gentlemen," said Frank, grimly, "I think you are intruding in a most unwarranted manner."

He stepped forward as he spoke, and the man in pajamas retreated, crying:

"Look out for him! He is a violent young desperado!"

The entire party flourished their weapons threateningly. In doing so the man with the shovel hit the little man with the revolver on the head, staggering him. The little man dropped the revolver, uttering a howl, and the baby squalled worse than ever.

Fortunately the revolver was not discharged, but the little man trembled like a leaf in a gale, and he crept back to the weapon, stretching out his hand gingerly toward it, as if he feared it would bite him.

The ludicrous side of the whole affair overcame Frank, and he burst into a merry peal of laughter, in which Harry joined.

"Hear them laugh!" rumbled the red-faced man. "Did you ever see such total moral depravity in youngsters of their years?"

"Never!" nodded the man in pajamas, shaking his head.

"Never!" agreed the man with the shovel, which he flourished again.

"Never!" echoed the man with the whisk broom, furiously brushing his own clothes.

"Never!" squeaked the man with the revolver, and then he jumped, as if his own voice had startled him.

As soon as Frank could stop laughing he said :

"Gentlemen, you have made a mistake in coming in here like this. This infant is all right, but we have forgotten to give it its milk at the regular time, and it is crying of hunger. That is all. I see the bar is not yet closed, and, without doubt, I can get some warm milk there. If you will be good enough to retire I will go down for the milk, and I think I'll soon be able to quiet the child."

"He talks in a plausible manner," hoarsely admitted the red-faced man. "Rather an honest-looking boy, after all."

"You don't know him!" cried the man in pajamas.

"Perhaps we had better get out and give him a chance to get the milk for the baby," said the man with the shovel. "I am sure he will do it."

"You don't know him!" repeated the man in pajamas.

"I move we give him a trial," urged the man with the hatchet. "It can do no harm."

"I tell you that you don't know him!" persisted the wearer of the pajamas.

"Come on! come on!" squealed the man with the revolver, who plainly was anxious to get the weapon out of his hands. "Let's see if he will keep his word."

"We will," nodded the red-faced man. "We will

give him exactly half an hour to quiet that child. If it is not quiet at the expiration of that time we will call again. Come on."

Then he marched out of the room, and the others followed.

CHAPTER XXX.

ARRESTED.

"Thank goodness! our lives are spared!" gurgled the professor, sinking limply on a chair, pale and breathing heavily.

"Look out for the baby, Harry," said Frank. "I will be back with that milk as soon as possible."

Then, quickly putting on his shoes, coat and hat, he dashed out of the room and hurried down to the bar.

Fortunately there was plenty of milk to be obtained. Frank explained that it was required for a baby, and the barkeeper being a married man with children of his own, it was soon properly reduced with pure water and warmed.

The baby was still crying when Frank returned with the milk.

"How can we feed it?" asked Jack, helplessly. "The baby is too young to drink it from a glass."

"That's all right," laughed Frank. "I have the outfit for feeding it in my pocket. I found it when I found the child on the train."

Everything was soon arranged, and it was aston-

ishing how quickly the little fellow stopped crying when he got a taste of that warm milk.

"Well, this has been a wild night so far," laughed Frank, as he held the little one in his arms.

"It has been a regular tip-rarer—I mean a rip-tearer!" said Harry.

"It has been much too wild to suit me," admitted Jack.

"My hair must be white as snow," groaned the professor.

"It is," laughed Harry—"nit."

Again Frank sung lullabies to the child, and when it had satisfied its hunger it fell asleep.

Then they all went to bed again. Some time in the night Frank got up and warmed some more milk with the aid of the gas jet, and the baby drank again.

The guests of the hotel were not disturbed again that night by the cries of the infant.

In the morning the boys did not find it difficult to persuade the professor that the best thing possible was to deliver the baby to the authorities at once.

"All right," grumbled Scotch. "It is against my principles, but I do not think I could live through another night like the one just past, so I will yield."

They decided to get out of the hotel immediately.

Scotch concealed his torn clothes with his overcoat.

As Scotch had brought the child in, and as he had seemed to be its father, it was decided that he had better carry it out. The task was much to his distaste, but he had caused them to care for the baby, and he was forced to yield.

They descended the stairs, with the professor in advance, carrying the infant. As the professor reached the ground floor a man rushed out of the office crying:

“Here he is now!”

It was the young man with whom Frank had had the encounter in Springfield, and he caught hold of Scotch.

This man was followed by a policeman, who also seized Scotch, flourishing his club, and exclaiming:

“Arrh, ye kidnaping spalpane! We hiv yez noow! It’s ter phrison ’ye’ll go fer this job, me mon!”

In his consternation and terror Scotch nearly dropped the baby to the floor. He turned pale and gasped for breath, being unable to utter a word.

The big red-faced man with whom Scotch had fought came out of the office and glared with contempt and scorn at the professor.

“I knew you were a ruffian or a crook of some sort,” declared the big man, in a self-satisfied manner. “I said that you had the face of a pirate. I hope they will send you up for twenty years for this job!”

"Oh, Jupiter! Jupiter!" moaned the professor. "What will happen next? I'll die of heart-failure if there is anything to follow this!"

"Your trial and sentence will follow it," exultantly asserted the big man. "It will give me satisfaction to serve as a witness against you and your gang of young crooks. Why, you must be a perfect old Fagin! You must be teaching those boys the tricks of crime! I'll bet you have showed them how to pick pockets and crack tills! Oh, you'll spend the rest of your life behind the bars!"

"Frank!" cried the professor, wildly, "come down here and explain to these lunatics that they have made a most outrageous blunder!"

Frank was hurrying down the stairs, seeing that the professor was in trouble. The other boys followed closely.

"Call in another officer!" cried the red-faced man. "Don't let these youngsters get away! They will serve as witnesses against this old reprobate! And I'll wager something that queer-looking bag is full of burglars' tools."

In vain the boys tried to explain. The young man with the silk hat seemed to take a malicious satisfaction in having them arrested, and, when another policeman appeared, they were all held for the patrol wagon.

"Av wan av yez troies ter escape it's his head he will get cracked wid a chlub," declared one of the policemen.

"Well, this easily beats all the scrapes I ever run up against!" admitted Harry. "Won't the fellows dall fed—I mean fall dead when they hear of this!"

"I don't believe we'll be able to stay in Yale," said Jack, ruefully. "They will jolly us to death."

"It certainly is a horse on us," acknowledged Frank. "And it all comes from the professor's insisting that we keep the child and care for it till it could be restored to the proper parties. His kindness of heart has placed us in a bad box."

"Arrh! g'wan, ye shly spalpanes!" exclaimed the policeman, who had been listening. "Thot sort av a yarrun won't go at all, at all. Ye'll not git out av th' schrape by thelling thot."

Then the patrol wagon came rattling up to the front of the hotel, and the party of prisoners were marched out under guard, as if they were the most desperate ruffians, and carted off to the station house, where they were locked up.

"Well, professor," said Frank, "here's where your kindness in caring for that infant instead of notifying the police has landed us."

A heartbreaking groan came from Scotch, who

seemed utterly unnerved and broken up by the situation.

"My poor boys!" he said, his voice breaking. "It is awful—awful! And I am the cause of all our misery. I confess it! I'll never have anything to do with children again as long as I live. A bach like me has no business to have anything to do with children. They are sure to get him into trouble. Oh, mercy! mercy!"

Never had Frank seen the little man so utterly wretched and downcast, and the boy rather pitied Scotch. But Merriwell saw his opportunity, and it was too good to be lost.

"If you had sent me the thousand dollars, as I requested, this would not have occurred," he declared.

"True, true," nodded the professor, who had taken a seat on a bench.

"We would not have been in Springfield, and you would have gone right through to Boston, if you were going to Boston at all; but I do not believe you had an idea of going to Boston. Tell me the truth, professor, were you really on your way to Boston?"

"Well, I was traveling toward Boston till I stopped at Springfield. Yes, yes—that is right."

"Oh, yes, that is right; but did you intend to go beyond Springfield? Own up—confess that you meant

to go to New Haven all the time. You did not believe I wanted to pay a thousand dollars for a horse. You thought I must be in some serious scrape, and you were going to investigate. You did not trust me—thought I had lied to you. Don't deny it!"

Scotch groaned again, but said not a word.

"Now you can see what your unjust suspicions did for us all," Frank went on, severely, for he was not pleased to know that Scotch could think he had told a deliberate lie.

"Yes, yes!" came huskily from the little man.

"We are under arrest, charged with the crime of kidnaping. We are locked up in this miserable cell. We were carted through the streets of Hartford in a patrol wagon, as if we were criminals of the worst sort. You are regarded as a second Fagin. It is believed that you are an old villain who is teaching us the ways of the criminal. That must be very pleasant to you!"

"Oh, merciful goodness! It is killing me!"

"Next time, professor, I hope you will trust and believe me."

"I will—I promise that!"

"And when we get out of this scrape, if we are thus fortunate, I hope you will lose no time in forking over the money I want."

"You shall have it—you shall have it!"

"But we are not out of this scrape by a long distance," said Jack. "We must produce witnesses to vouch to our good character."

"I am afraid we may find it difficult to produce witnesses in Hartford," said Frank. "We are not known here."

"But we must send to New Haven."

"Wow!" cried Harry. "Think of that! I'd rather go to jail!"

Frank shook his head.

"I hardly feel like sending to New Haven," he said, "but we may have to do it to save ourselves."

"Oh, if we could keep this matter quiet!" fluttered Harry. "We must keep it quiet! We'll never hear the last of it if it colls into gettage—I mean gets into college."

Diamond flushed. He was rather proud and high spirited, and what they had passed through had cut him to the bone. The thought of letting the fellows at Yale know what had happened was torture to him.

"Rattleton is right," he declared. "We must do anything to keep this wretched matter from reaching Yale. It would ruin our college careers! We would be guyed so that we'd have to get out."

"And I am the cause of it all!" moaned the miserable professor.

"Well, what can we do?" asked Frank. "Somebody must appear for us, or we'll be jugged, and then the matter is sure to come out."

"Professor, you suggest something," urged Rattleton.

"I can't!" helplessly urged Scotch. "I can't think!"

"You must send for somebody who will appear and vouch for your good character, professor," declared Frank, sharply.

He grasped Scotch's shoulder and gave the little man a sharp shake.

"Rouse up, now, and send for somebody," he urged.

"I don't know of anybody I can send for this side of Bloomfield," muttered the professor.

"Then you will have to send to Bloomfield. I am known there, too. It is pretty tough to have the people at one's home know a fellow has been arrested, but I don't see that we can do anything else."

"We may all have to send home," said Harry.

"Never!" cried Diamond. "I wouldn't have my parents know of this for any sum of money!"

"You are louder than Prucifer—I mean you are prouder than Lucifer!" said Harry.

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN COURT.

Frank finally got Scotch aroused, and the little man fell to rattling at the grating in the door of the cell.

In a few moments a thick-necked, stupid-looking guard appeared.

"Wotcher want?" he raspingly demanded, glaring at Scotch. "Wotcher makin' all this racket fer?"

"I—I wish to send some messages to my friends," said the professor, timidly.

"Wot's dat? Wotcher want do dat fer?"

"So they will vouch for my standing and good character."

The guard laughed hoarsely.

"That's a joke!" he said. "You ain't got no standing nor good character. You can't play smooth with me. I've got it straight that you're der worst one in der biz."

"The biz?"

"Yes, der business."

"What business?"

"Kidnapin' children. You've done time fer that be-

fore, and you'll go up again—you an' yer gang of slick-lookin' young roosters."

"You're mistaken!" roared the professor, getting excited. "This is an outrage! I am a respectable and honest citizen, who was never before arrested in all his life, as I can prove! Somebody shall suffer for this! I won't stand it! Somebody shall pay dearly for this piece of business! I'm no kidnaper!"

"G'wan, yer red-whiskered old crook!" growled the guard, glaring at Scotch. "You can't come der indignation racket on me! I'm onter your curves!"

"You are a shallow-brained, empty-pated apology for a man!" thundered Scotch, who was now fairly aroused. "You don't know your business. If I——"

"What's that? what's that? I have a mind ter come in there an' give yer a swift push in ther neck!"

"If you come in you will go out in pieces!" declared Scotch, hotly. "Don't you try it!"

"Good gracious!" gasped Harry, laughing; "would he fight if the guard came in?"

"Not much!" smiled Frank. "He'd try to get under something where he would be safe."

"I'll see what I can do for you when I get out," promised Scotch, glaring back at the guard. "A creature like you is not fit to hold the position you have!"

"A creature like you is fit ter hold der position you have—dat's behind bars," declared the guard.

"Oh, keep it up!" roared the little man., "You know you are safe out there! But this abuse of prisoners shall be reported!"

"What you say about it won't cut much ice."

"Oh, you'll see—you'll see!"

"Dat's all right. Yer want to simmer down, and keep quiet. If I hear any more racket from this cell I'll come back here and quiet yer. Understand?"

"Go on! Get away!" shot back the professor. "You are offensive to my sight! You'll be sorry for this later!"

The guard uttered some decidedly strong language, and then he departed.

"Outrage upon outrage!" shouted Scotch. "Did you ever see anything like it? It is awful—simply appalling! But our inning will come soon, and then we'll get back at somebody."

"I hope you are right," said Frank; "but it does not look as if we were to be given half a show."

"The baby!" exclaimed Jack, suddenly. "What became of the baby?"

"That's so!" cried Harry. "What did become of the baby?"

"Professor," called Frank, "what did you do with the baby?"

"I didn't do anything with it."

"You must have done something with it, for you had it last. It is not here with us."

"The fellow with the silk hat took charge of it."

"That young ruffian? It is an outrage! The mystery of that baby is still a mystery to us."

"And the girl—what became of her? There's another mystery."

"The fellow with the silk hat must have traced us from the train to the hotel. He had located us there shortly before we started to leave."

"And now he has located us here," groaned Scotch.

"And we are not even allowed to communicate with our friends!"

For a long time they talked the matter over. At last they began to get hungry, and they became more and more so as the morning advanced.

Frank rattled on the grating and again brought the guard around. He informed them that they could have something to eat by paying for it. Frank ordered breakfast for them all, and then had to pay about four times what it was worth.

The food was brought in, and when they had eaten, they felt somewhat better, with the exception of Scotch,

who was greatly depressed, as he declared over and over that it was the first time he had ever been arrested, and he could not help feeling the disgrace of it.

At exactly a quarter to ten in the forenoon guards appeared and unlocked the door of their cell. Then they were escorted to a room where they knew their examination was to take place. They were placed behind a rail along with a few other prisoners, all of whom were common drunkards. An unusually large number of bluecoats were on hand to guard the prisoners, and there were several newspaper reporters in the room, as the report had gone out that a most desperate gang had been captured.

The place was well filled with spectators, who stared with awe at the professor and the boys, who were believed to be the desperate characters. The spectators called each other's attention to the party, pointing them out, and making audible remarks.

"Those red whiskers are worn to disguise his face," said a voice, and all knew Scotch was the person spoken of, as there was no other person with red whiskers in the room.

"He grew them after he was released from Sing Sing the last time," declared another. "His picture is No. 2,309 in the Rogues' Gallery."

Scotch grated his teeth and glared in a manner that made him look piratical indeed.

"Look at him now!" urged a third. "Isn't that the face of a beast who would delight in any sort of crime!"

"Oh, there is no question about his utter depravity! And he delights to get hold of young boys and teach them to become pickpockets, burglars, kidnapers and bank robbers."

Scotch writhed in his seat, suffering tortures unmentionable; but it was utterly impossible for Frank and Harry to keep from smiling, for all of their situation.

"They say those young fellows with him are some of his most expert pupils," observed a man with a soiled shirt and a dirty paper collar, not to mention an air of knowing it all that was simply oppressive.

"Oh, I could strangle some of those gawking fools!" rumbled the professor, in Frank's ear.

"Did you hear that?" hoarsely whispered a little man among the spectators. "He would not hesitate to cut a throat!"

"Think of a little innocent baby being all night in the clutches of such an inhuman brute!" sniffed a tall, thin man whose left eye was out of plumb. "It's a wonder the infant escaped with its life!"

"That's so," nodded a countrified-appearing old fellow, who had tobacco juice on his whiskers. "I hope they'll put him inter jail for the rest of his natteral life!"

"It is a shame for such a wretch to run at large and contaminate young men and boys," said the man with the soiled paper collar. "Them fellows with him don't look so awful bad."

"Not yet," admitted the tall man, rolling his crooked eye about in what seemed a painful effort to cause it to cover all three of the lads at once. "But they're coming—anybody can see that. They've got the lines of villainy traced on their faces, and each year will sink those lines deeper and deeper."

"I think they're more depraved than they look," observed the little man. "See how they laugh! They don't seem to mind it at all."

"I'd like to go out there and punch the heads of those confounded fools!" grated Jack, who was enraged.

"Oh, but this joke is too good to keep!" gasped Harry, punching Frank. "It is the richest thing I ever heard of in my life!"

"I never ran up against anything just like this before," smiled Frank. "It is rather rich, but I'd enjoy

it a great deal better if I knew just how it was going to end."

"Look over in the witness box," said Harry. "There's the man who wore the pajamas. He's here to get even for being kicked downstairs."

"And there's the red-faced fellow with whom the professor had the fight down at the bar."

"He looks satisfied and triumphant, as if he felt that he made no mistake in sizing the poor professor up as a villain."

"Boys," said Scotch, seeming between a furious outburst of rage and a flood of tears, "have I got the face of such an infernal old pirate? Would any one pick me out at first glance to be a man who could take delight in torturing children and teaching boys to become criminals? If it is true that I look as wicked as everybody seems to think, I'm going to wear a veil hereafter!"

Poor Scotch! Never before in his life had he passed through such humiliation and torture!

The reporters tried to get at the prisoners to talk with them, but they were kept back by the police.

At last the judge appeared. He was a stern-looking man, with a straight-cut, thin-lipped mouth that seemed to say there was little of the milk of human kindness left in his heart.

Court was declared open.

Then the young man with whom Frank had had the encounter in Springfield came in, bringing the baby.

Barely had he taken a seat when a policeman escorted into the room the girl who had left the baby on the train. She was in tears, and her face was very pale.

As the girl was led toward the prisoner's box she saw the young man and the baby. She stopped in her tracks, as if thunderstruck, and then gave a shriek of joy. The next instant she rushed forward and snatched the infant from the young man's arms, clasping it to her bosom and kissing it wildly.

"That doesn't look as if she intentionally deserted the baby," said Frank, who was rather puzzled.

"I should say not!" exclaimed Jack. "She is overcome with joy to find it, anyway."

"Look at the fellow with the silk hat laugh!" gurgled Harry. "He seems as satisfied as anybody can."

Then everybody saw the girl turn to the young man, and heard her excitedly say:

"Oh, John, John! This is too good to be true! Poor, dear little Horace! I was afraid I'd never see him again!"

"I told you last night that I would find him, Emma," said John, somewhat vauntingly. "I have kept my word."

"You have, but I don't know how to repay you."

"I know how you can," declared the young man, regardless that others were watching and listening. "I have been trying to get you to marry me for a year, but you would not have me, and you caused the professor to discharge me, so I would not bother you any more. You even threatened to have me arrested; but I did not give you up. Now I have found the baby and restored him to you. If you want to repay me, marry me, Emma."

The girl blushed and hung her head, the baby laughed and chuckled, and the spectators, witnesses, prisoners and judge breathlessly awaited the girl's answer.

Finally she looked up and said:

"Well, John, I haven't been able to get rid of you, and I suppose I'll have to marry you."

There was a deep breath of satisfaction and relief in the courtroom.

CHAPTER XXXII.

OUT OF TROUBLE.

“Order in the court!”

The spectators and all others in the courtroom, with the possible exception of John, Emma and the baby, gave the judge their attention.

The common drunkards were called first, and the judge disposed of them one after the other, in short order.

At last the prisoners' box was cleared of all except our friends.

The names of each one had been taken when they were lodged in the cell, and the judge finally said :

“Horace Scotch, stand up.”

The professor arose.

“The charge against you, sir,” said the judge, sternly, “is that of abduction. Do you plead guilty or not guilty?”

“Not guilty!” cried Scotch. He attempted to say it in a firm and convincing manner, and, as a result, he roared it forth, causing the judge to jump, for he had not expected such a voice from so small a man.

"Well, you needn't bellow like that!" shot back the judge. "I am not deaf, sir!"

"Excuse me," Scotch hastened to say, his voice still hoarse and heavy. "It is my natural tone, judge."

"In that case I should say it would be a good scheme for you to get your voice reduced to fit your size. Sit down."

Scotch sat down.

Frank, Harry and Jack were charged with being the professor's accomplices and assistants, and they all pleaded not guilty.

Then the judge called for the evidence, and the young man who had finally succeeded in inducing the girl to agree to marry him was the first witness.

He said his name was John Collins, and that he had known Emma Davis, the young lady with the child, more than a year. Of his own accord he explained that he had fallen in love with Emma when they were both in the employ of the same party, a few months before. Emma had encouraged him at first, but when his attentions became too marked she tried to drop him. He would not be dropped, and he insisted that she marry him. Then she complained to the boss, and he was discharged. He was determined to have Emma for his wife. He watched for an opportunity to see her and have a talk with her. She avoided him.

On the previous day, he explained, he had seen Emma leave the place where she was employed in Meriden. She had the baby in her arms, and she took a train. Collins took the same train, and followed Emma to Springfield. When she left the train, carrying the baby, he stopped her; but she threatened to have him arrested, and would not talk with him.

He followed her to a certain house, and then watched till she came out near night, and followed her back to the station. At the station he resolved to speak with her again, and he did so. This occurred in the ladies' waiting-room. While he was trying to induce her to talk with him a youngster interfered and an encounter followed. He pointed out Frank Merriwell as the person who interfered with him, and he made it appear a most unprovoked and unwarranted act.

Collins explained that when a policeman was summoned he feared arrest and so he got away. He followed Emma on board the train. Shortly after leaving Springfield he sought the girl, determined to talk with her. In passing down the car he saw Frank Merriwell and his companions.

Emma threatened to complain to the conductor if Collins did not let her alone, and, rather than get into more trouble, he told her he would go back into the next car; but he informed her that he should never give

up till she had consented to marry him. He would have her some way.

When the train stopped at Hartford the girl came to him and begged him not to follow her about any more. She left the sleeping baby in the other car. They talked till the train started. Then she went back for the child, and found it was gone.

The girl was horribly frightened, and fainted. Then the passengers revived her and told her of the red-whiskered man and the three young men who had left the train at Hartford, taking the baby.

Emma hurried to Collins, and told him what had happened. He declared he would recover the child for her. They left the train at the first stop, and took a train back to Hartford. The girl was quite used up from crying when they arrived in Hartford. He took her to a hotel and left her, telling her to remain there till he sent for her.

Then he set out to trace the lost baby. He found parties who had observed the three lads and the red-whiskered man leave the car with the child. He finally found the cabman who had taken the party to a hotel. In that way, by morning he located the kidnapers. He took a policeman with him, and was making sure they were in the hotel when he saw the red-whiskered man

coming downstairs, carrying the baby in his arms. Then the entire party was arrested.

That was Collins' story. He had sent for Emma to meet him at court, knowing he could fill her with joy unbounded by restoring the baby to her just when she fancied herself under arrest and liable to imprisonment for losing the little one. He had worked his cards very well, and now she had promised to marry him.

No person in the courtroom was so well satisfied with the outcome of the affair as Collins. He grinned his satisfaction, and gave Merriwell a most crushing look.

Then the girl was called on to tell her story. She turned the baby over to Collins, as she stood up to be sworn. She corroborated Collins in everything. She further explained how it happened that she visited Springfield with the baby.

The baby's grandmother lived in Springfield. She was a very old and feeble lady, and she had never seen the child. The baby's mother was in such delicate health that she could not travel from Meriden to Springfield. The grandmother did not expect to live long, and she implored the mother to bring the child, or send it to her, so she might obtain a look at it. The mother trusted the girl, and she finally decided to send Emma to Springfield with the baby. This plan was carried out. For once in her life, at least, Emma did

a most careless thing, and left the child asleep on the car seat for a few minutes. Then the baby disappeared.

The judge then inquired if the baby's parents had been notified as to what had happened. He was informed that they had, and that the father would arrive in Hartford on a certain train—in fact, must have arrived already, and be on his way to the courtroom.

Then Scotch was called on to tell his story. He did so in his eccentric way, and it was plain that he was not believed. The judge, the witnesses, and the spectators all regarded him as a desperate criminal, and the judge endeavored to get at the motive for the crime by asking some questions. Scotch finally grew angry and called the judge an old numskull, whereupon he was promptly fined for contempt of court.

Then there was a stir in the courtroom. A tall, excited man came rushing in, his face covered with perspiration. He waved his arms and wildly demanded:

"Where is he—where is little Horace Scotch Jenks, my only son and heir? Produce him—bring him forth!"

"Cæsar's ghost!" roared Professor Scotch. "It is my old friend, Hiram Jenks, of Fardale Academy!"

"It is Professor Jenks, as I live and breathe!" cried Frank Merriwell, who was no less astonished than Scotch. "Is it possible he is the father of this mysterious baby?"

Professor Jenks recognized Scotch in a moment.

"Horace!" he cried, rushing forward, with outstretched arms. "Horace, my dear friend! Is it possible we meet again?"

"It seems so!" rumbled Scotch; "thank fortune!"

Then the tall man and the little man embraced in a manner that provoked smiles from the witnesses.

"Here, professor—here is the baby!" cried the girl, holding up the infant, eager to show that it was safe.

Professor Jenks rushed over and took the child. He kissed it and called it "Hoddie." Then he rushed back and held it up for Scotch to see.

"Isn't he a little beauty?" demanded Jenks, with all a father's pride and satisfaction. "And I induced his mother to name him Horace Scotch, after you, my dear friend. You know we were rivals for the affections of the Widow Cobb, and I captured the prize. But she has not forgotten you, and she was willing to call little Hoddie after you."

"And this," roared Professor Scotch, between indignation and laughter, "is the baby I have been arrested for kidnaping!"

Of course Professor Scotch and the boys were discharged by the judge. Then the red-faced man of the hotel and the man who wore the pajamas hastened to offer congratulations and express themselves as having never believed it possible Scotch could be a man who would kidnap a poor little innocent child.

The man with the soiled shirt and paper collar, the tall man with his eye out of plumb, the countryman with tobacco juice on his whiskers, and all the others who had pronounced Scotch and the boys such desperate criminals felt personally injured, and they left the courtroom, expressing to each other their conviction that if the man and the boys were not criminals they should be.

Professor Jenks invited Scotch and the boys to visit him. Scotch agreed, but the lads were eager to get back to Yale, dreading the explanations they must give.

At the solicitation of the girl Professor Jenks agreed to take John Collins back into his employ, and everything seemed to have ended in a very satisfactory manner, for Scotch was so good-natured that he lost no time in filling out a check for the sum of money Frank desired.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

EUNICE'S SECRET.

When New Haven was reached the boys were met by a riotous band of students bearing banners, on which were lettered inscriptions like the following:

"The great kidnapers," "This is a horse on Merriwell," "Who said haby—I—I mean baby?—Rattleton," "Baby, baby, that is the name I love—Diamond."

As the boys stepped off the train a wild yell went up from the assembled students. Then the trio felt themselves grasped and hustled into line, and away went the procession, with a fife and drum corps banging away at the head of the young fellows cheering all along the line.

Rattleton accepted it as a good joke, but Diamond was overcome with mortification, and longed for the ground to swallow him. Merriwell smiled and said nothing, knowing the boys were wondering how the students got onto the matter.

The next morning Frank received a nice note from Winnie asking him to call that afternoon.

Frank was pleased, yet he wondered how he would be received.

"She cut me on the street," he speculated. "I fancy it will be somewhat embarrassing when we meet."

In the meantime, he set about some detective work. He believed that there must have been several witnesses to the cowardly blow he had received when he was about to make the attempt to stop the runaway horse and it was his desire to find them all. He seemed to remember that a man who was standing on a corner nearby at the time must have witnessed the whole affair.

Frank found time to go down to that part of the city and seek for witnesses, but at first he did not discover any person who had seen him knocked down. He found several who saw him jump up after the runaway passed, and they all supposed he had been upset by the horse, or had leaped from the carriage.

"I am quite sure Winnie will be able to settle it," thought Frank. "She must have seen the fellow fairly, and she will know if it was Hartwick."

Two reporters had called on Frank, and the papers came out with a description of the runaway and Frank's gallant work in stopping the frightened horse.

Winnie Lee had also been interviewed, and she had said some very complimentary things about Frank, so that he blushed like a girl when he read the reports in the papers.

There were few students at Yale who did not read the accounts of the affair in the papers or heard all about it from some other fellow within a short time, and Frank found that he had again done something to distinguish himself.

Frank waited with impatience the approach of the hour set by Winnie for him to call. It came at last, and within one minute of the time set he ascended the steps of her home and rang the bell.

That she was watching for him immediately became evident, for the door instantly opened and Winnie was there. She had not been able to wait for a servant to let him in.

Winnie caught hold of Frank's hands with both of hers, and drew him into the hall.

"Frank!"

"Winnie, my queen!"

And Frank knew the past was forgotten.

It was nearly an hour later that Eunice Darley, who was visiting Winnie and who was in a room above, was called down to meet Frank.

Eunice found two very happy-looking young persons in the parlor, and it was plain they had come to a perfect understanding.

Eunice gave Frank her hand.

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Merriwell," she de-

clared; "and I congratulate you on your remarkable achievement in stopping Winnie's runaway horse. I have read the papers to-day—we both read them, didn't we, Winnie? You are a perfect hero. And the reporters say this is but one of many heroic things you have done."

"The reporters like to exaggerate, you know," smiled Frank.

"I am sure that statement was not an exaggeration," said Eunice, who seemed to have changed since Frank saw her last, being much graver and more dignified.

"Of course it wasn't!" cried Winnie. "Why, I've just found out that he has traveled all over the world. He has saved other girls from greater peril than I was in yesterday. Why he says he was able to save Miss Bellwood from the clutches of a gorilla in Africa!"

"Then there is such a person as Miss Bellwood?" asked Eunice.

"Oh, yes; he acknowledges that."

"And Miss Burrage."

"Yes, he says there is a Miss Burrage."

Eunice seemed surprised.

"I did not believe it," she acknowledged. "I felt certain the proofs you received from a certain person who did not sign his name to his letters were all manufactured to injure Mr. Merriwell."

"No," said Frank, gravely; "a part of what this person claimed is true, and a part is false. I wondered that Winnie should cut me as she did after our little misunderstanding, and I never knew the cause till a short time ago, when she showed me the anonymous letters she received. The writer of these letters had been to some pains to find out about my history. He had found out that my father was a fortune-seeker and was seldom seen at his home during the last years of my mother's life; but he lied when he said my father was a gambler and a criminal."

A look of pain came to Eunice Darley's face, and she pressed her handkerchief to her lips. Frank observed her agitation, but she motioned for him to proceed.

"My accuser was unable to prove that my father had ever committed a criminal act, but he could offer proof that he was a wanderer and an apparent outcast. He could also offer proof that I had corresponded with Inza Burrage and Elsie Bellwood, and that, in a certain way, I had been very attentive to them both. That I ever pledged myself to marry either of them is false. That I broke Elsie Bellwood's heart by my treatment of her is also false. That I am still bound to Inza Burrage is not true. Both of these girls ceased to correspond with me of their own accord. I wrote them last,

and they have not replied. Where either of them can be now I have not the least idea.

"There, that is the truth, and Winnie believes me. She is sorry she allowed herself to be deceived by a person who is my relentless and unscrupulous enemy. We have come to a perfect understanding, and I do not think he will be able to make any further trouble between us. What do you think, little queen?"

Winnie smiled up at him.

"You know I have told you I'll never allow anybody to cause me to doubt you again, Frank."

"I am certain," said Frank, "that the writer of the letters to Winnie was the same one who struck me down in front of the runaway horse yesterday; but, unfortunately, Winnie was so frightened at the time that she did not observe him closely, and she is not ready to swear it was Evan Hartwick."

"Oh, he is mean and cruel and cowardly enough to do that!" cried Eunice Darley, springing to her feet and walking the floor in great excitement.

Winnie was at the side of her friend in a moment.

"Be calm, Eunice," she urged. "Frank declares he will return Hartwick's blow. He has stood too much from that fellow, and he means to crush him now."

"But it must not be known that I ever did anything against him!" fluttered Eunice, in terror. "He must

not know that I identified the writing of the anonymous letters you received as being his, for all that it was disguised."

"He shall not know."

"How can Mr. Merriwell strike him without letting him know we are in any manner concerned?"

"He hopes to find witnesses to prove that Hartwick struck him down almost beneath the feet of my horse. That will cause Hartwick's expulsion from college."

"And that will be the heaviest blow he could receive," declared Eunice. "I am sure his father will make him go to work and earn his own living if he is expelled."

"Then it will be the best thing for everybody if he is expelled," said Frank. "He will be busy, and he will not have so much time to trouble others."

"Oh, if I might never see his face again!—if I might never hear of him again!" cried Eunice.

Frank wondered at the girl's fear and horror of Hartwick. It seemed remarkable.

Of a sudden, releasing herself of Winnie's arm, which had been about her waist, Eunice turned to Frank.

"Mr. Merriwell," she said, swiftly, "I believe you are thoroughly honorable, and I think I may trust you with my secret. I am sure you will not betray it."

And then before he could speak she went on:

"I have a brother. He was charged with a crime, and he is in prison. He was tried and committed under a fictitious name. His mother does not know what has become of him. She thinks he went to Australia, and she expects him to return some day. It would break her heart if she knew the truth. Evan Hartwick knows it."

She choked at that point, and then bravely continued:

"This wretch Hartwick has used that secret to compel me to do things he could not have induced me to do in any other way. He forced me to aid him in trying to win Winnie's regard; he compelled me to drop the drug in your glass of drinking water at the time when you afterward seemed to be intoxicated at Mrs. Greydon's; he has made me pretend to like him when I have despised and hated him all the time. This is the truth, Mr. Merriwell—the wretched truth!"

"I believe you, Miss Darley."

"I would give anything if that fellow was compelled to go to some foreign country and remain there the rest of his life—if he might never communicate with any one in this country."

"I have no further regard for Mr. Hartwick," said

Frank, rising. "I shall return the blow he struck me—with interest. If I can prove he delivered that blow, he will be forced to leave Yale. I'll not bring either of you two young ladies into the matter, but I will utterly crush the fellow!"

Frank's face showed that he was most intensely in earnest.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

EVIL PASSIONS.

Hartwick was raging in his room like a caged and infuriated wild beast. In his hand he held a paper which gave a full account of Frank Merriwell's feat in pursuing and stopping the runaway. In connection with the report of the affair was a brief sketch of Merriwell's career since entering Yale, and he was pictured as a most ambitious, nervy and remarkable young man.

The door opened and Ditson sauntered in, dressed immaculately and smoking a cigarette. The contrast between the polished appearance of Ditson and Hartwick's air of general slouchiness was remarkable.

A stranger seeing the two together would have supposed Ditson was the son of very wealthy parents, while Hartwick's parents were poor.

"Ah, dear boy!" greeted Roland, in a languid way. "What is the matter? Something unusual, I am sure."

"Come in and close that door, confound you!" snarled Hartwick. "I don't care to have everybody who goes past staring in here."

Ditson obeyed the command in a very leisurely manner.

"You seem to be somewhat excited, Harty," he observed, as he toddled over to a chair, upon which he gracefully sank.

"Harty!" cried Evan, fiercely. "You want to drop that! If you value your personal safety, don't call me Harty!"

"By Jove! but you are in a bad way, dear boy! what can be the matter with you? I never saw you quite so excited."

"Look at this! Confound your eyes! can you see this? Read it! If that isn't enough to drive a man out of his senses!"

He held the paper before Ditson, and pointed with a trembling finger to the article concerning Merriwell.

"Aw! I've read all that, my boy," drawled Roll.

"Oh, you have?"

"Yes. I presume nearly every fellow in college knows about it by this time, you understand."

"That's it!" Hartwick almost shrieked. "It is that fellow's infernal luck! He is a hero again! Oh, if that horse had gone over him—had trampled him to death!"

"You mean when he was knocked down by the horse as he tried to stop it the first time?"

"Knocked down by the horse! Bah! That is what knocked him down!" and Hartwick shook his fist under Ditson's nose.

Roll elevated his eyebrows.

"Really?" he exclaimed. "I don't understand."

"I struck him down, you blockhead! Do you understand now?"

"Look here, Hartwick, you want to be a bit more careful with your tongue! I don't care about being called names—not even from you."

"Oh, is that so? I am the only man at Yale who does not call you names. All the others call you a traitor and a sneak!"

"That's all right! I'll make some of them sorry some time!"

"Yes, you will—nit! You haven't the nerve of a sick cat!"

Ditson flung aside his cigarette and straightened up.

"I have stood as much of this from you as I am going to stand, Hartwick," he declared. "You want to drop it, or I will do something you won't like."

A sneer came to Hartwick's face. He was in an ugly mood, and, from all appearances, he had never liked Ditson. Now he seemed to rejoice in the opportunity to pick a quarrel with him.

"What will you do?" he asked, mockingly. "What will you dare to do, you brave fellow?"

"You ought to be aware that I can do something unpleasant if I care to. I can tell certain things concerning you that——"

"Oh, very brave! Yes, I suppose you might. You kept that foil with which I tried to mark him for life by driving the point through his mask. You could show that I fixed the button so I could remove it. Oh, yes, you might do that!"

"I did not say that I would, Hartwick," said Roland, quickly; "but I want you to remember what I might do."

"If you do such a thing, you want to look out for me!" Hartwick snarled. "I'll get at you some way!"

"Oh, I don't know!" returned Ditson, somewhat tauntingly. "You don't seem to get at Merriwell so very fast."

"Ah-rr-rh!" snarled Evan, grinding his teeth. "No other fellow in the world could have such luck as that dog! I have been watching for a month to get at him. Yesterday I saw my opportunity. I saw him walking along the street. At the same moment I saw this runaway, and I recognized Winnie Lee in the carriage. I saw him prepare to stop the horse and save

her. The thought that he would again become a hero in her eyes maddened me!"

Ditson grinned scornfully.

"Still stuck on her," he commented. "Still fancying you can get back into her favor some way."

"At that moment I hated them both!" cried Hartwick, fiercely. "I felt that I had rather she should be dashed from the carriage and killed than that he should rescue her and again become a hero in her eyes!"

"Well, what did you do?"

"I was furious! I believe I was mad for the moment. I saw him rush out to stop the horse. As the horse came along I struck Merriwell on the back of the head, knocking him down directly before the frightened animal, and he was stunned so he lay there. There was no time for him to escape had he not been stunned.

Ditson was greatly interested.

"And still he escaped."

Hartwick gave another snarl.

"Escaped! Satan must have protected him! The horse sheered—the wheels brushed him—he was not touched! Think of that! If it had been any other fellow he would have been maimed or killed; but Merriwell escaped without harm."

"And you?"

"I got out of that as quickly as I could. He was stunned, and he did not know who hit him. When he jumped up he rushed after the runaway, without looking for me."

"And he stopped the runaway?"

"Oh, yes! oh, yes! Of course he did! Somebody had a horse ready at hand for the emergency, and with the aid of that horse he overtook the runaway and brought him to a halt, which anybody could have done. Now he is once more a hero, when he should be lying in the hospital!"

Hartwick raved like a maniac, tearing about the room. Ditson really enjoyed it. He lay back and lighted a fresh cigarette, something like a smile lurking about his face.

At last Hartwick stopped before Roland.

"What are you grinning about?" he grated, quivering with rage. "I believe you are glad this happened as it did!"

"Oh, no, dear boy!"

"Don't 'dear boy' me! I know you are no real friend of mine! I have known it all along! What are you in here to-day for, anyway?"

"Why, I called to see you, that is all."

"Well, it is time for you to go. You do not im-

prove the state of my mind at all. Your room is preferable to your company."

Ditson was surprised, for Hartwick had never dared to speak in such a manner to him before this.

"Oh, well, I'll go!" he said; "but you might let me have twenty-five dollars, as I need it bad, you know, dear boy."

"So that is what you came in for? That's what you have hung onto me all along for! I knew it!"

"Oh, come now——" Ditson started to protest.

"Shut up!" hissed Hartwick. "I know it, I tell you! You have kept that foil that you might keep your grip on me! You have borrowed, borrowed, borrowed! Not a dollar or a cent have you paid back. It has been blackmail pure and simple!"

"Oh, my dear fellow, you are——"

"Shut up!" came still more fiercely from Evan. "I have seen through your little game all along! Now I am going to tell you something."

"Go ahead."

"If you do not give up that foil this day, I'll make you sorry you were born! No more money do you get from me! Understand that! If I lay for you, I'll get you! You'll have no such luck to save you as this fellow Merriwell!"

"Why, you are threatening me, are you? You are going to push me to the wall?"

"I am going to make you give up that foil and then I am done with you. You are no assistance to me, because you have not the nerve to strike at Merriwell. You let me do everything."

A desperate look came into Ditson's eyes. He had held Hartwick in his grip, and he did not propose to lose his hold so easily.

"I shall not give up the foil," he declared; "and I want twenty-five dollars. I want it now."

Ditson had decided to become absolute master then and there.

"You'll not get twenty-five cents!" shouted Hartwick, unable to keep his voice down. "And if you do not give up that foil——"

"I will give it up—but not to you."

"What do you mean?"

"I'll give it to Merriwell. Do not think for a moment that he will be soft enough to let you off again. I'll tell him all I know! The foil will be proof. And then——"

With a snarl like the sound that might have come from the lips of a mad dog, Hartwick leaped on Ditson, caught him by the throat, and bore him backward across the couch. Evan's fingers closed on Ditson's

throat, choking back any words or cry that might arise. He pressed his thumbs into the windpipe of the attacked lad, and forced his knee deep into the pit of Ditson's stomach. His face was working with a terrible, unreasoning passion, and his eyes glared with a light that filled Ditson's soul with horror inexpressible.

And then, as Ditson grew black in the face, Hartwick suddenly gasped for breath, his grip slackened, and he staggered backward, dropping limply into a chair. His heart was not performing its proper functions. His rage had brought on another attack.

Ditson sat up, and the two glared at each other. Hartwick was pressing his hands to his heart, while Ditson was rubbing his throat.

A great fear had come into Ditson's eyes. He realized at last that he had been playing with fire.

"He meant murder!" Roland thought.

"I saw it in his face! I saw the foul fiend in his eyes! It was a close call for me! I must get out!"

Then he arose weakly to his feet, and hastened from the room, trembling in every limb.

Hartwick called to Ditson in a whisper, and motioned for him to stay; but Roland paid no attention, save it were to hasten away all the faster.

CHAPTER XXXV.

PROOF.

Ditson was badly frightened, and he was furious at the same time.

"I am done with him," he muttered. "But I'll fix him! No fellow can use me that way! I'll make him sorry! He will be driven from Yale!"

He believed he had lost his grip on Hartwick, and he was in a desperate mood. He felt that he would do anything to get even with the fellow who had made such a fierce assault upon him.

Ditson was revengeful, but he lacked nerve. He was not one to engage in an open encounter with a foe.

He was not logical in his reasoning, and, being enraged, he did not pause to consider that he might get himself involved if he tried to strike at Hartwick.

Now that he feared Hartwick, Ditson's one thought was to drive him from the college, which he believed could be done.

That evening Merriwell came into his room, a look of satisfaction on his face. Rattleton was studying.

"I have the proof that I want," declared Frank.

"Eh?" said Harry, looking up and tossing the book aside. "How is that?"

"I have found a man who saw the person who struck me."

"Scrate Gott!—I mean great Scott! you don't say so!"

"I am giving it to you straight."

"Who is it?"

"A man who was on a nearby corner at the time I was struck."

"What does he say?"

"He says he saw the fellow who struck me, and he is certain to recognize him if he sees him again."

"And it was Hartwick who did the job?"

"It seems so."

"What are you going to do?"

"Prove it, and then strike back."

"How will you bike strack—or, strike back?"

"With this," and Frank held up his fist.

"That's all right, but it's not all you are going to do, is it?"

"Wait and see."

"You are foolish if you do not crush Hartwick. You can have no sympathy for him now, and you should——"

Harry stopped. The door opened and three fellows

came in. They were Browning, Diamond and Griswold.

"Hello, fellows!" cried Griswold, cheerily. "Why, that is a tragic attitude of yours, Merriwell. You look like an actor. I was an actor myself once. I went out with the Baker Shop Company, and played a leading *rôle*."

"But he didn't get the dough, even though he kneaded it," murmured Browning, as he settled into a comfortable chair.

"No, I couldn't seem to make a raise," said Griswold, with a grin.

"Look here!" cried Diamond; "you fellows will have to stop punning, or I'll chase myself."

"Speaking about chasing yourself makes me think of a horse race I witnessed the other day," observed Griswold. "It was between two horses with very peculiar names—Feet and Brains."

"Yah!" grunted Bruce, wearily. "I presume Feet had a walkover?"

"No," chuckled Danny, "Brains came in a head."

"Get out!" shouted Rattleton—"get out of here! Every time you fellows come around you bring a load of chestnuts, and we stand can't it—I mean we can't stand it!"

"Not guilty!" protested Diamond. "You never hear me springing gags of that sort."

"That's so," nodded Frank. "Sit down, Diamond, and make yourself at home. You are welcome."

"Hey?" cried Griswold. "Does that mean that Browning and I are not welcome?"

"Oh, no, not at all," smiled Frank. "You are all welcome."

"What a relief!" sighed Browning. "I am settled for the evening."

"On the level, Merriwell," said Browning, "we dropped in to congratulate you on your freshly acquired fame. That was a great job you did in stopping that runaway horse, not to mention the baby——"

"It was not so much," said Frank. "The papers made it seem more of a trick than it really was."

"You are too modest altogether, Merry," cried Griswold.

"But we have heard something about your being knocked down in front of the horse," said Diamond. "Is that a fake, or is it straight?"

"It is straight enough," nodded Frank, suddenly becoming serious. "I was knocked down."

"By some person?"

"Yes."

"And do you know who it was?"

"Not absolutely, but I will know before long."

"I can tell you now, Mr. Merriwell," declared the voice of a person, who now pushed open the door, which had been standing slightly ajar, and entered the room.

"Ditson!" cried the lads in astonishment.

"Ditson—here!" muttered Frank.

"Mr. Merriwell," said Roland, "I wish to speak with you privately."

"Anything you have to say to me you are at liberty to say before these gentlemen," returned Frank, instantly.

Ditson hesitated. He held something in his hand; that something was wrapped with paper.

"I'd rather speak privately with you," he said.

Some of the lads moved as if to leave the room, but Frank checked them.

"Stay where you are," he said. "I prefer to have witnesses to any conversation that may take place between Mr. Ditson and myself."

Roland was pale, and he seemed nerved up.

"Perhaps you do not wish to hear what I have to say," he questioned.

"Go ahead, sir."

"Well, it is like this: I have been friendly with Evan Hartwick of late, but he assaulted me to-day. I be-

lieve he was crazy enough to murder me, and I am afraid he may attempt it again. Now if I will give you the proofs you desire against him, will you agree not to use them to injure me, and to protect me from him?"

"Mr. Ditson," said Frank, slowly, "I do not care to make a compact with you. You are my enemy, as you have demonstrated. I do not trust you. I will make no agreement."

Ditson was dazed for a moment, for he had expected Merriwell would be only too glad to make a bargain with him. However, he felt that he had gone too far to withdraw. Hartwick would learn that he had offered to turn against him, and it was certain that Hartwick would be furious. He could not back out now.

"I throw myself on your generosity, Mr. Merriwell!" he cried. "I am going to tell you anyway, and I believe you are too much of a gentleman to injure me with any information I may give you. I know Hartwick was the one who struck you down in front of the runaway, for he told me so to-day. I will swear to that. It was an attempt to maim you for life—or kill you!"

"By thunder!" cried Griswold, wildly. "That settles his hash!"

"But that is not all I wish to tell you," Ditson swiftly and almost tremblingly continued. "I know that he deliberately planned to mark you for life when you fenced with him. I did not know it before the encounter took place, believe me. He simply told me that he would fix you, but I did not know what he meant, or how he was going to do it. He had prepared his foil in advance so that he could remove the button, and the point was sharpened. He had me smuggle the foil out of the gym. I have kept it ever since. His initials are on the handle. Here it is!"

Ditson removed a broken foil from the paper. Merriwell took it, and examined the point of the blade. As Ditson had said, it showed that it had been tampered with. The others crowded around and looked at it.

"What will you do, Merriwell?" they asked.

"I shall look for Mr. Hartwick this evening," answered Frank, grimly.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FRANK STRIKES BACK.

Hartwick was in his room. There came a knock on the door.

"It is Ditson," he thought. "He has come back to settle things. I am glad of it, for I didn't want to go to him.

"Come in," he called.

The door opened and Frank Merriwell entered. He was alone.

Hartwick was staggered.

"You?" he cried—"you here?"

"Yes," said Frank, coldly, "I am here."

"What for?"

"To settle with you."

"Settle!" snarled Hartwick, savagely. "What do you mean by that?"

The key was in the door. Merriwell turned it in the lock, took it out and put it in his pocket.

"I will tell you what I mean," he said, still speaking without a trace of excitement, yet with an ominous sound in his voice. "You have tried to injure me in the most cowardly manner, and you——"

"Open that door!" cried Hartwick. "If you do not, I'll shout, and I'll swear that you came in here and threatened my life!"

"You will do nothing of the kind," declared Frank.

"Why not?"

"Because when the fellows came to this door, I would let them in and tell them what I know about you—what I can prove."

"You can't prove anything."

"That is where you are mistaken."

"Well, what can you prove—what dare you prove?"

"I know what you think. You believe I refer to certain things which would involve two young ladies. I do not. I would not mention those things. But I can prove that you attempted my life by knocking me down in front of the runaway yesterday."

"Bah! That is a bluff! You cannot prove it!"

"You are mistaken. Mr. Roland Ditson has declared before myself and four others that you told him so."

"I do not believe it!"

"You will before I am through. I can prove another thing."

Hartwick ground his teeth, but did not speak.

"I can prove that, with a fixed foil, you tried to pierce the mask that protected my face, so that you

might destroy one of my eyes, mark me for life, or kill me, perhaps."

"How can you prove it?"

"By producing the foil, with your name on the handle."

Hartwick forced a harsh, derisive laugh.

"More bluff!" he cried.

"Do you think so? Look at this!"

From beneath his coat Frank took one-half of the telltale foil.

Evan glared at it and then he turned pale. He realized that Merriwell had told everything straight.

Like a tiger, he leaped at Frank, thinking to take him by surprise, knock him down and obtain possession of the foil.

Merriwell dropped the broken foil behind him, warded Hartwick off, and then his fist shot out.

Crack!—a terrific blow landed between Hartwick's eyes, knocking him down in an instant.

Frank picked up the foil.

"Blow for blow!" he cried, standing over his prostrate foe. "And this is not the end! With such as you one cannot be merciful! I have tried it. If you wish to escape open disgrace and expulsion from college, you will leave Yale immediately and never return, Evan Hartwick! I mean it! I will give you un-

til to-morrow noon to get out. If you are not gone by that time, the whole college shall know the kind of man you are—the professors shall know it! You will be publicly disgraced! This is my blow in return for the disgrace you sought to bring on me!”

Then, without another word, he took out the key, unlocked the door, and departed.

* * * * *

When Frank Merriwell next called on Winnie Lee he informed her that Evan Hartwick had left Yale and New Haven for good.

“How did that happen?” asked Winnie, in surprise.

“He was driven out by the pressure brought to bear on him,” answered Frank, with a strange smile.

“I do not think I understand.”

“Well, the time came when I was forced to do something to protect myself, and you stood in fear of him.”

“Oh, I did!” cried Winnie, drawing closer to Frank. “He seemed to hate me after I found out what a mean fellow he was, and would have nothing to say to him.”

“I obtained proof that he struck me down before your horse when I tried to stop the animal. I obtained proof of other things. He knew I could cause his disgrace and expulsion.”

"And he ran away?"

"He left rather than face disgrace, for I promised to expose him if he did not go. Did I do right, Winnie?"

"Right, Frank? Why, I do not believe you would willingly wrong a person for all the world!"

"Dear little girl!" he softly said, his arm encircling her.

"And I am so glad Hartwick is gone!" said Winnie. "I was awfully afraid of him!"

"You need fear him no more, my queen," murmured Frank, as he gave her a tight squeeze. "If he ever bothers you again, I'll soon send him about his business."

"You have been through many perils, Frank," went on Winnie, with a little shiver. "I hope, in the future, you have plenty of sport but no more difficulties."

"I guess I'll have my full share of both," he answered, with a laugh, and he was right, as we will see in the next volume of this series, entitled, "Frank Merriwell's Races," wherein we will meet many friends and perhaps a few enemies again.

But for the time all went well. The boys celebrated Hartwick's absence from Yale by a grand spread in Frank's room. The spread lasted until three in the morning and the fun never died down once in that

time. When the others left they sang one of their favorite songs, and Frank was the hero of it.

"For he's a jolly good fellow!
For he's a jolly good fellow!!
For he's a jolly good fellow!!!
Which nobody can deny!"

THE END.

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